Utopian Dreams or Peacetime Pragmatism?
The Successes and Constraints of Post-War Reconstruction in the South West

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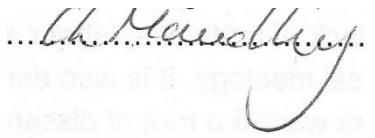
I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: 

Abstract

This thesis examines the post-war reconstruction process undertaken in the three South Western cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. The cities provide examples of the difference approaches taken to reconstruction and different political backgrounds, allowing for the testing of current reconstruction narratives. These narratives include the impact of different political ideologies on reconstruction plans, the influence of traders and 'big business', the 'top-down' nature of planning and the impact of the post-war economy on reconstruction. This thesis also examines the continuity between pre- and post-war planning in the three cities, and the influence of interwar plans on post-war reconstruction. The interwar period is demonstrated to have a greater influence on post-war reconstruction plans that previously credited, with interwar concerns such as traffic congestion and slum clearance informing the post-war reconstruction and housing plans. There is also a previously uncredited line of continuity between the pre- and post-war local authorities, with staff and councillors serving their cities throughout the period, further influencing plans. The wartime planning in the cities is demonstrated to have been more inclusive than previously suggested, with the three cities engaging with citizens and businesses to try to plan for all. The influence of economic and financial factors on these plans is examined and demonstrated to have been far more important than political factors, with changes and approaches coloured by the lack of materials, labour and finance rather than political ideology. It is also demonstrated that these factors were the root of dissent amongst traders and property owners, rather than any particular failing of the plans themselves, particularly the financial and land ownership clauses of the Town and Country Planning Acts 1944 and 1947. Finally, the successes of the planning and building process are assessed, along with the reception of the rebuilt cities amongst citizens and the press.

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Introduction

The subject of this thesis is the post-Second World War reconstruction of the South Western cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. The reconstruction and planning of Britain's cities after the Second World War has attracted a significant body of research and literature across a number of disciplines, including architecture, planning, sociology and history. The last decade and a half in particular has seen a growing interest in the subject of reconstruction, especially as many of these cities have begun to redesign and replan again. However, this research has focussed on a small selection of the blitzed cities, with emphasis on the industrial centres, such as Coventry, and major port cities, such as Portsmouth. Little consideration has been given to the smaller blitzed cities and what might be learnt about the reconstruction process as a whole from their experience. The research has also tended to split between housing provision and central areas reconstruction, with the two halves of reconstruction treated in isolation with very few attempts to consider the impact of each on the other. This thesis will re-examine the reconstruction of blitzed cities through the lens of the South Western cities in order to test the current reconstruction narratives and open up further the local and national history of post-war reconstruction.

The period 1945 to 1955 was one of extraordinary urban change, rivalling even the massive city expansions of the Victorian era.[1] Wartime bombing had left many cities with devastated central areas, damaged industries and a reduced housing stock. The cessation of house-building during the war had also created a more general housing

[1] See Gordon E. Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Shaping of Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* (London; Edward Arnold, 1988); Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities,* (Middlesex, Pelican, 1968) for overview of city expansion in these periods.

shortage which required urgent attention. Reconstruction therefore became a prime objective for local and national government and the general public, encompassing not just the rebuilding of war damaged areas but the more general redevelopment of all urban areas.[2] During the war reconstruction became a key issue for increasing morale both on the home and fighting fronts, with discussions around the post-war creation of a 'Brave New Britain' acting as an incentive for wartime efforts. Reconstruction did not just cover the physical rebuilding of damaged buildings and new homes, it also encompassed education, social welfare, industry and employment. In this spirit, blitzed cities were encouraged to plan not just for the rebuilding of war damaged areas, but for the redevelopment and expansion of their city in all areas over the next two to three decades. Reconstruction plans therefore do not just feature the rebuilding of shops and factories but the building of schools, public buildings, cultural and leisure facilities, and transport infrastructure.[3] Likewise, the public were encouraged to engage with and discuss issues around the reconstruction of the nation, in order that their views could be taken into account. The concept of town planning was not new, having gained credence and popularity during the interwar period, and it highlighted the problems of slum housing, traffic congestion and poor transport infrastructure. It became accepted that town development needed to be directed and carefully planned in order to avoid the nuisances and congestion of the past. The passing of new legislation during the interwar period gave local authorities the power to create planning schemes, which

[2] William Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning: A Study in economic and social history of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* (London: Routledge, 1954); Cherry, *Cities and Plans*; J.B Cullingworth, *Town and Country Planning in England and Wales*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964).

[3] Cherry, *Cities and Plans,* pp.113-116
Nick Tiratsoo, Junichi Hasegawa, Tony Mason & Takao Matsumura, *Urban Reconstruction in Britain and Japan 1945-1955: Dreams, plans, realities* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2002); Richard Sheppard, *Building for the People* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948).

allowed them to tackle urban problems head-on. These early planning schemes in turn helped to shape and refine planning concepts throughout the interwar era and during the war itself.

A total of nineteen towns and cities were officially designated as blitzed cities, including the cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. These three cities will provide the case studies for this thesis, with some additional supporting material provided by the other blitzed cities. The three South Western cities offer examples of the different approaches to planning taken by local authorities, such as the use of consultant planners, the use of in-house staff and the influence of local politics and organisations on plans. The cities are broadly similar in terms of their economies and position within their region and all had compact urban areas pre-war. They also represent different political positions, which allows for the comparison of political approaches to reconstruction. This study will also cover a wider period of time than many of the existing reconstruction studies because it will also take into account the pre-war conditions and planning initiatives in each location, an essential context for understanding wartime and post-war developments.

Themes in Reconstruction and the Current Literature

The process of reconstruction is surprisingly poorly documented, with many published local histories of war damaged towns and cities tailing off with the coming of peace in 1945. The process of reconstruction tends to be skated over with little

indication of how the city's recovery was designed and executed.[4] The body of academic literature on reconstruction is more fully developed and has grown considerably over the last decade and a half, partially due to renewed interest in reconstruction being created by widespread urban regeneration. The existing literature is spread across a number of disciplines, encompassing geography, planning, sociology and architecture as well as work within a more traditional historical framework. Within the latter category, Junichi Hasegawa and Nick Tiratsoo have produced the most influential work with their studies on blitzed cities, including Coventry and Bristol, and the planning framework of the 1940s.[5]

The bulk of current research has, however, come from the disciplines of geography and planning, such as Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay's work on Plymouth and Peter Larkham's extensive output on postwar building.[6] This can lend a technical bent to some existing work which results in the neglect of some of the historical context of reconstruction, such as the financial or political background of the era. In addition to this, much of the existing literature has concentrated on a small number of example cities, led by Coventry, and focused on a narrow set of research questions. As a result certain tropes and narratives have become prevalent, such as the role of the master planner, the influence of local politics, the lack of consultation with local people and the influence of 'big business'. These factors are important to

[4] W.G Hoskins *Two Thousand Years in Exeter,* (1st edition, Exeter: James Townsend & Son, 1960); Peter Thomas, *Fire on the Wind* (S.P. 1992); H.P Twyford, *Plymouth; It Came to Our Door: The story of Plymouth throughout the Second World War* (Plymouth: Underhill, 1975); John Perry, *Bristol at War* (Derby: Breedon Books, 2002).

[5] Nick Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics: Coventry 1945-1960* (London: Routledge, 1990)*;* Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of British Blitzed Cities 1945-1955: Myths and realities', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp. 27-44; Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992).

[6] Stephen Essex & Mark Brayshay, 'Vistion, Vested Interests and Pragmatism: Who remade Britain's Blitzed Cities?', *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4 (2007), pp. 417-441; Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961: Devising and defending a Modernist agenda' in Mark Clapson And Peter Larkham (eds.) *The Blitz and its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

the process of reconstruction, but the narrow focus on their role within the process has helped to produce a set of assumptions around reconstruction. For example, research into Coventry's Labour-led council and radical reconstruction plan has helped create the perception that radical planning was a product of Socialist thinking[7], while the exceptionally modest plan of Conservative-led Portsmouth is thought to demonstrate the thinking of Conservative councils everywhere.[8]

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A number of themes are evident across the current body of reconstruction literature, such as the role of planners, the role of national and local politics, the economics and finance of reconstruction, constraints on building and planning and the social aspects of reconstruction. Many of these themes are intertwined, such as the political and financial aspects of reconstruction, and these often also require us to ask further questions about related subjects, such as the architecture of reconstruction. What is particularly interesting about these themes and the way they are tackled in much of the recent research into reconstruction is the negative connotations attached to them. Reconstruction as a whole has gained a very negative image, particularly in terms of the architecture and the supposed foisting of plans and building styles on an unwilling populace. This concept runs as an undercurrent through the majority of existing literature, and is occasionally explicit within the analysis of reconstruction by some researchers. Many of the most prominent researchers within reconstruction pitch their work against these negative views of reconstruction, such as Tiratsoo's challenge to the idea of socialist ideas leading reconstruction, but it is often not clear where the

[7] Nick Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* is the best example of the Coventry literature.
[8] Junichi Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940's', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.45-62.

negative view has come from.[9] Some of the research reviewed here has aligned itself with the negative view of reconstruction, but much of it has set out to unpack and re-evaluate these ideas. The best example is that of the role of professional planners in reconstruction. The concept of the master planner who was out of touch with 'the public' and imposed idealistic and sterile new plans onto blitzed cities has become embedded within popular culture.[10] The role of these individuals has become over-emphasised, with 'the planners' becoming an amorphous group of individuals who are attributed with considerable influence and control over what was to be built.

Attitudes towards buildings which were constructed within the last sixty years tend to be equally negative and often reflect this idea of 'the planners' imposing their vision on an unwilling populace. What is unclear is how this idea, along with several of the other recurring themes within reconstruction, became embedded in the popular consciousness and therefore the literature. It has been suggested that the campaigns of the Conservative governments since the 1950s has helped to create the negative image of the planner and the modern building and embed it in the common knowledge.[11] There was a definite shift in attitudes towards public building in the 1970s which has also helped to instil the negative image of 'the planners' and public building and appears to be one of the platforms for much of the recent literature. The growing socio-economic problems of the decade, which often were reflected in increasing disorder and breakdown within social housing, led to the assertion that the

[9] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, pp. 2-4
[10] See BBC 'The Era of Radical Concrete', http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29082338 (accessed 10/9/14) and 'I loved/loathed my 1960's high-rise block', http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29160925, (accessed 17/9/2014) for two recent examples.
[11] Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-1955: Myths and realities', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.41-42; Robin Harris (ed.), *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher,* Speech at the Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 9th October 1987 (London: Harper Collins, 1999), pp.286-287.

design of the estates and towns was the root cause.[12] The increasingly obvious flaws in some types of housing, particularly high-rise blocks, and the revelations regarding financial corruption within local authorities which had marred the reputation of public building, added to the backlash against all public building.[13] As the architectural style of the 1950s and 1960s began to be blamed as the cause of some social problems, it appears that all architecture of the era fell out of favour and dragged down all of the buildings of this era with it. The reconstruction literature of the last twenty-five years has aimed to rehabilitate the reputation of post-war reconstruction efforts and those who created the plans.

The idea of the 'master planner' is one which is tackled frequently in the literature. Professional planners were brought in by some local authorities, such as Plymouth and Exeter, as consultants to oversee the development of a plan. The role of these individuals, as already described, is often stated to have been all-encompassing with the master planner credited with the creation and execution of reconstruction plans. Susanne Cowan's contribution to *The Blitz and its Legacy* demonstrated this perspective very well, with Cowan arguing that the initial enthusiasm for reconstruction planning was exploited by 'the planners' for their own gain.[14] Cowan refers to the "increasing complaints by citizens" about the "imposition and inefficiency" of planning, but does not engage with the constraints on planning or the reasons for introducing comprehensive planning legislation post-war.[15] Planning

[12] For example, see Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and reality in planned housing* (London: Hilary Shipman, 1985).
[13] Keith Ross, *Non-Traditional Housing in the UK: A brief review* (Watford: Building Research Establishment, 2002) for an overview; John Grindrod, *Concretopia: A journey through the rebuilding of post-war Britain* (Brecon, Old Street, 2013) pp.323-345, 363-381.
[14] Susanne Cowan, 'The People's Peace: The myth of wartime unity and public consent for town planning' in Mark Clapson And Peter Larkham (eds.) *The Blitz and its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)
[15] Cowan, 'The People's peace', p.79.

legislation is painted as the product of pressure by 'the planners' on parliament to expand the influence of the profession. What Cowan overlooks is the lack of professional planners in this period and the fact that the majority of reconstruction plans were executed by local authorities, not professional planners. Both Exeter and Plymouth's councils used two of the most respected consultant planners of the day, Patrick Abercrombie and Thomas Sharp, but neither Sharp nor Abercrombie had any control over what was eventually built. Instead, this was down to the councils' themselves and their staffs. In addition to this, the pressure applied to parliament for legislation was generated by the local authorities themselves, who in turn were reacting to pressure from traders and property owners who wanted to start rebuilding.[16] Complaints regarding planning were frequently voiced by those who had a vested interest in rebuilding and feared a personal financial loss, which Cowan also fails to analyse fully.

Not all cities used consultant planners with some instead choosing to replan their cities using existing in-house staff. This was the route that Bristol City Council chose to follow, as described by Junichi Hasegawa in his *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre.* Likewise, the decisions of the London County Council regarding its housing policy, as outlined by Nick Bullock, falls within this category, as many of the decisions were made by the District Valuer.[17] Bristol's plan was a comprehensive one covering all aspects of city development and was as radical in some respects as those produced by professional consultant planners.[18]

[16] Plymouth and West Devon Record Office (PWDRO hereafter), 1495/43, 'Lord Mayor's Secretary: Reconstruction August 1943- January 1944 – Plymouth replanning and reconstruction'.
[17] Nick Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities: Reconstruction and the LCC 1945-1951', *Planning Perspectives,* 9/1 (1994), pp.87-101.
[18] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* pp.77-79.

The idea of the planner as sole creator of reconstruction plans tends to be tied to the idea that all plans were created in a top-down manner and that planners didn't consult with or care about what 'ordinary' people wanted. This idea can be seen within popular works such as David Kynaston's *Austerity Britain* which suggests that the vision of the planner and architect overruled the wants of the 'ordinary' person.[19] This idea is frequently reinforced within works on housing, where the image of the planner as social engineer is often invoked. The design of municipal estates tends to be characterised as an attempt to force socialist values or unrealistic concepts of how communities should function onto the population. Alice Coleman's *Utopia on Trial* is written on this theme and condemns the design of many municipal estates as a 'planner's eye view' of how housing should be constructed.[20] Coleman's work and others, such as Lynsey Hanley's *Estates*, assumes that the local authorities which built the estates did not consult with prospective tenants over the design or layout of dwellings and imposed their own values and ideas onto them.[21]

Similar themes can be found in works concentrating on central areas reconstruction, such as Peter Larkham's *Remaking Cities* and David Adams *Everyday Experiences of the Modern City.*[22] Larkham states that the top-down nature of planning can be seen through the artists impressions of the new city centres in published plans as they do not show anything negative, such as poverty or anti-social behaviour. Larkham suggests that this demonstrates in a very direct way that planners and local authorities did not have room in their new cities for the poorest in

[19] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).
[20] Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* (London: Hilary Shipman, 1985).
[21] Lyndsey Hanley, *Estates: An intimate history,* (London: Granta Books, 2007). The opposite view is espoused by Mark Clapson, 'Destruction and Dispersal: The Blitz and the 'break-up of working class London' '*The Blitz and its Legacy'*, pp.99-112.
[22] Peter Larkham, 'Remaking Cities: Images, control and post-war replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24/5 (1997), pp.741-760; David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives*, 26/2 (2011), pp.237-260.

society or those who challenged the social norm.[23] This very literal interpretation of the drawings demonstrates a pattern of thought that is frequently present in the current literature; that the plans were intended to make the world in 'the planners' eyes. David Adams makes a similar claim with his work on Birmingham, stating that the city demonstrates the planner's attempts to impose a specific 'way of seeing' onto the cityscape. Adams believes that the city's replanning reflected the problem of the planners-eye gaze which was distanced from the 'complexities and ambiguities of everyday life in the city'.[24]

What is frequently missed, or at least not acknowledged, is that these plans involved the input of local people to a far greater degree than in any previous era and would be on a par with modern planning. Local groups were consulted directly with regard to what they would like to see in a reconstructed city and local people were encouraged to share their views with the local authority. Tiratsoo, Hasegawa and Tatsuya Tsubaki all highlight the work done by local authorities in this vein, with exhibitions, pamphlets and talks all common as ways of attempting to engage the population with the planning process.[25] The three South Western cities all engaged in such consultation activities and all canvassed local traders and businesses with regard to how their city centres should be replanned. It is suggested by several writers that the problem was not a lack of consultation, but a lack of interest amongst local people instead. This concept is explored in some depth by Steve Fielding in his contribution to *The Attlee Years* and is touched upon by Tiratsoo in his discussions

[23] Larkham 'Remaking Cities: Images, control and post-war replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24/5 (1997), pp.742.
[24] Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City', *Planning Perspectives*, 26/2 (2011), pp.238.
[25] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre*, pp.70-78; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, pp. 29-30; Tiratsoo et al, *Urban Reconstruction in Britain and Japan 1945-1955*, pp.10-12;Tatsuya Tsubaki, 'Planners and the Public: British popular opinion on housing during the Second World War, *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2008), pp.81-98.

on Coventry and Cowan's work on post-war consensus.[26] As the local authorities in Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all used a variety of methods to canvass their populations, the three cities give the opportunity to test both the accusation of a lack of consultation and a lack of enthusiasm on the part of citizens for comprehensive reconstruction.

Closely related to the themes of planners and their interaction with the wider population are the themes of architecture and conservation. It is a frequent feature of both reconstruction literature and recent public opinion that 'good' standing property was destroyed by reconstruction. Peter Larkham refers to this in his collaborative work with David Adam's into the reconstruction of Birmingham. Their work used oral history to create a polyvocal history of the reconstruction and refers to the regret of some respondents regarding the loss of pre-war buildings which survived the blitz.[27] The same view is often expressed in popular histories of bombed cities, such as Peter Thomas and Jacqueline Warren's *Aspects of Exeter*, and is frequently found in the discussion forums of local history websites.[28] Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay note in their work on Plymouth's reconstruction the "arrogance" of Plymouth City Council in their dismissal of pre-war architecture as "not of a high standard" and therefore expendable.[29] Likewise, the negative attitude of both Exeter City Council and Thomas Sharp towards Exeter's Victorian architecture is noted by Todd Gray in his *Exeter in the 1940's,* along with Sharp's perceived lack of interest in restoring

[26] Steve Fielding, 'Don't Know, Don't Care' in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), *The Attlee Years,* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), pp.106-125.
[27] David Adams and Peter Larkham, 'Bold Planning, Mixed Experiences: The diverse fortunes of post-war Birmingham' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp.137-150. It should be noted that the interviewee sample used in their work was very small with 22 participants. This would represent 0.006% of the city's population in 2011 (year the research was done).
[28] Peter Thomas & Jacqueline Warren, *Aspects of Exeter,* (2nd edition, Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2006); See 'Demolition Exeter' for an example of web forums - http://demolition-exeter.blogspot.co.uk/
[29] Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961: Devising and defending a Modernist agenda' in *The Blitz and its Legacy*, p.156.

standing buildings.[30] The perceptions around the architectural merit of pre-war buildings are mostly a matter of individual opinion and taste, but tend to be fuelled by the propensity today to assume that all older buildings are 'good' and should be preserved at any cost. The fact that many of the buildings earmarked for destruction would have been - age-wise and in opinion terms – on a par with the buildings of the 1950s and 1960s is entirely missed. It appears that the optimum time for a building to be destroyed is when it is sixty to eighty years old.[31] At this stage it is not considered old enough to be worth preserving and is considered both common-place and old fashioned enough to destroy without thought. The lost buildings which are lamented in the existing reconstruction literature were frequently of this age, a fact which is often entirely overlooked. The buildings of the Victorian and Edwardian era were essentially viewed as many 1960's buildings are now – ugly, impractical and badly built.[32] The current opinion of post-war buildings taints many writers view of both the reconstruction process and its results, and this is closely tied with the presentation of planners and local authorities as top-down and arrogant in their approaches. Instead of viewing the buildings of this era with modern eyes, it is important to understand why the architecture was chosen and what its impact was at the time of construction. This will help to unpick the question of whether the reconstruction of the blitzed cities was indeed top-down with no consideration of what local citizens wished to see.

The political themes within reconstruction centre on the relationship between Labour and Socialism versus the Conservatives and the free market. The socialist aims of reconstruction and the idea of Labour over-reaching itself to achieve them are

[30] Todd Gray, *Exeter in the 1940's: War, Destruction and Rebirth* (Exeter: Mint Press, 2004)
[31] This hypothesis put forward by Gray in *Exeter in the 1940's,* p.135
[32] For an exploration of conservation in planning, see John Pendlebury, 'Planning the Historic City: Reconstruction plans in the United Kingdom in the 1940's', *The Town Planning Review,* 74/4 (2003), pp.371-393.

common themes within reconstruction literature as a whole.[33] It is always assumed that Labour councils drove the most ambitious plans and these had the most 'socialist' aims. This idea is explored in some depth by Tiratsoo in his work on Coventry and is also touched upon by Hasegawa in his work. Tiratsoo notes that the city enjoyed extensive Labour support until the mid-1950s, at which point the lack of progress in building amenities resulted in a surge of support for the Conservatives who promised unhampered redevelopment. Tiratsoo suggests that Coventry's progress in rebuilding was hampered by the Labour council's social policies and their desire to create a 'responsible' community-orientated society, although he also notes that the changing financial position of the city was a major factor in its ability to build.[34]

Conservative-led local authorities are also subject to the same reductive thinking as their Labour counterparts, with the Conservative areas painted as reactionary and over-cautious in their planning. Hasegawa explores this theme in his work on Portsmouth, pointing to the Labour-led councils of Coventry and Plymouth as 'ardent' supporters of reconstruction compared to the more muted response of Portsmouth's Conservative council. The city's initial reconstruction plans were modest compared with many other blitzed cities, but were extensively scaled back due to concerns around the potential cost of the scheme. The City Council considered dropping the revised scheme altogether in 1949, which Hasegawa attributes to the Conservative council's lack of political will toward reconstruction.[35] However, both of these depictions fail to recognise that many reconstruction plans were drawn up prior to 1945 under Conservative-led councils, including the plan for

[33] For a particularly visceral representation of this, see Correlli Barnett, *The Audit of War: The illusion and reality of Britain as a great nation,* (London: Macmillan, 1986).
[34] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluance and Labour Politics*, pp. 48-50, 89-91, 106.
[35] Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940's', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp. 46, 49, 57-59

Plymouth. The plan for Plymouth was one of several portrayed as examples of Socialist over-ambition and its origins with a Conservative-led council make it an excellent example for testing the prevailing political concepts around reconstruction. There is often a lot of rhetoric around the political aspects of the planning process, with the aforementioned accusations of social engineering, of ignoring 'ordinary' people, of being 'arrogant' in wanting to re-zone city centres or change street plans and ignoring how this would disrupt the 'lived' spaces of the city. The political nature of the arguments around planning frequently ignore the problems that city centres faced pre-war with narrow streets, traffic congestion, bad housing and poor placing of industry.

The financial aspects of reconstruction are interconnected with the political questions, with particular reference to the use of private finance and development companies for central areas rebuilding. This particular aspect of reconstruction frequently reveals the conflicting thought present across the different strands of reconstruction literature, with the best use of private and public enterprise for rebuilding becoming muddled. It is suggested that within central areas rebuilding local authorities were weak and bowed to trader pressure, which allowed private development companies to dominate the rebuilding of Britain's city centres.[36] This is frequently linked with the perceived substandard construction of buildings and the homogenisation of the High Street, as the rents charged by the development companies are thought to have pushed out the small trader and allowed the multiple store to flourish. At the same time it is suggested that local authorities were too rigid in their top-down plans and should

[36] Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961', pp. 159; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre*, pp.54-56; Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940's', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.57-58; Aiden While & Malcolm Tait, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* Vol.24/1 (2009), p. 82.

have allowed private developers a free hand, as they could have rebuilt better, faster or more cheaply. What is often not fully explored is why private development companies were used in the first place, rather than local authorities or blitzed traders building themselves. The serious economic problems facing the UK in the late 1940s and the financial aspects of the 1944 and 1947 planning acts left both local authorities and property owners in fiscal difficulty. Local businesses and authorities alike found that the financial assistance offered by the government was inadequate for their needs, while the redirection of capital project finance into the export market starved reconstruction of both finance and materials. The role of the Investment Programmes Committee (IPC hereafter), a central government advisory body, in the allocation of both materials and finance for building projects has not been fully explored, but Catherine Flinn's recent work has suggested that this might be the key reason for the lack of finance and therefore the slow pace of reconstruction. Flinn observed in *Reconstruction Constraints* that the IPC allocated resources by department, but the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, which was responsible for central areas reconstruction, was not represented on the committee. It therefore had little influence over the IPC's decisions and was unable to put the case for reconstruction directly to the committee.

The resultant lack of resources and finance left local authorities with little choice but to use private development companies and large businesses to undertake rebuilding, as they were the only people who had financial power to do so.[37] This appears to be the single most influential factor in central areas reconstruction and the explanation behind many of the changes to plans. The lack of financial support from central government is noted by Tiratsoo in his work on Coventry and Hull, Hasegawa

[37] Flinn, 'Reconstruction Constraints: Political and economic realities' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp. 88-90. See also Flinn's unpublished 2007 MA thesis 'Overlooked Constraints: The reconstruction of blitzed city centres in Britain 1945-55'. Copy lodged with the Devon Heritage Centre.

on Portsmouth, Bristol and Southampton, Essex and Brayshay on Plymouth and Flinn on Exeter, demonstrating the widespread impact of the problem.[38] The financial aspect may trump the political argument in terms of influence over what was built, as the political leadership of a local authority becomes irrelevant if the finance to build with is missing. Flinn also points to the unexplored nature of the exact relationship between private finance and local authorities and suggests that this would be a further area of research. This point will be investigated more thoroughly in this thesis using the archives of some of these companies.

The financial and economic aspects of reconstruction also produce some interesting questions regarding the public perception of national finance and economy during the post-war years. Economic planning had become a familiar concept alongside town planning during the interwar years, with all political groups expressing ideas around increased state-control of industry and national economy. The experience of increased state control of industry during the First World War and Britain's declining export production in the post-armistice years led to the concept of economic planning becoming embedded in the political and economic psyche of all political parties to difference degrees.[39] This idea was most radically taken up by the Labour Party, who saw national economic planning and the planned economy as the natural successor to the laissez-faire capitalist systems, particularly after the economic slump of 1929. As noted by Daniel Ritschel, Labour's vision of economic planning

[38] Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961', in *The Blitz and its legacy,* pp.159; Flinn, 'Reconstruction Constraints: Political and economic realities' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp.87-97; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.14-15, 108-110 & 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940's'pp.51-52; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp. 34-35, 41-42,74-75; Aiden While & Malcolm Tait, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* Vol.24 No.1, Jan 2009, p. 82.
[39] Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Claredon, 1997), pp.4-5, 21-25, 31-39.

included the state control and eventual ownership of land, transport and the distributive trades, heavy industry, including coal and steel, shipbuilding and the electricity network.[40] The experience of the war economy and Labour's vision for a planned economy both inter- and post-war has a bearing on wartime urban reconstruction. The vision for a reconstructed Britain post-war included the reconstruction of industry and society, with the nationalisation of some key industries, such as coal, and the implementation of a welfare state according to William Beveridge's vision.

These ideas and the concept of the planned economy may have left property owners with the impression that town planning was the first step towards land nationalisation and state-control of industry and the economy. The years of 'austerity Britain' after the war may have reinforced this idea, especially at a time when the nationalisation of some industries was underway. The work of Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska on austerity and rationing uncovers the discontent of the middle classes in these years, potentially giving another angle on the concept of 'planners' and the disconnect between planning and public.[41] As 'planners' could also refer to the proponents of economic planning as well as urban planning, the work of Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Ritschel suggests that the supposed revolt against 'planners' may refer to the interference of the state in everyday life as much as the creation of new townscapes. The activism of middle-class housewives against rationing and a declining standard of life, as documented by Zweiniger-Bargielowska and James Hinton, suggest a fear of a socialist, classless future as much as a

[40] Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning*, p.109.
[41] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Austerity and the Conservative Party after 1945', *The Historical Journal,* 37/1, 1994, pp.173-197.

protest against the inconvenience of queuing and shortages.[42] This could translate to a similar fear amongst property owners and traders, who feared that the loss of control over private property brought by post-war plans was the first step towards the loss of private enterprise altogether. Ritschel's work also suggests that the post-1945 political 'big five' of Clement Attlee, Herbert Morrison, Sir Richard Stafford Cripps, Ernest Bevin and Hugh Dalton may have added to the uneasiness of traders and property owners, as all five were interwar proponents of economic planning and the restriction of private enterprise.[43] The declining support for reconstruction amongst traders and property owners during the late 1940s in the three South Western cities provides an opportunity to examine this idea further.

The provision of housing encompasses many of the same problems and challenges which faced local authorities in rebuilding the central areas. The current literature frequently treats housing and central areas reconstruction as two separate issues, which appears a natural division but in fact succeeds in missing the close relationship between the two.[44] The need for housing had a major impact on the ability of local authorities to start rebuilding the central areas, mostly owing to the way in which central government allocated resources. Housing itself became a political issue which could not be neglected, forcing both government and local authorities to prioritise house building over all other projects, as demonstrated by Harriet Jones and Peter Weiler in their investigations into housing policy between 1945 and 1955.[45] The slow

[42] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ibid; James Hinton, 'Militant Housewives: The British Housewives' League and the Attlee Government', *History Workshop,* No.38, 1994, pp.128-156.
[43] Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning,* pp.100-101.
[44] Nick Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities: Reconstruction and the LCC 1945-51', *Planning Perspectives,* 9/1 (1994), pp.87-101; Peter Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain: The Whitehall Debate 1941-45', *Planning Perspectives,* 18/3, 2003, pp.177-196.
[45] Harriet Jones, 'This is Magnificent!: 300,000 houses a year and the Tory revival after 1945', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.99-121; Peter Weiler, 'The rise and fall of the Conservatives grand plan for housing', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp. 122-150.

pace of central areas reconstruction became a bone of contention as a result and was key to the loss of interest amongst the public in reconstruction and planning. It has also been suggested that the slow pace of building overall was the result of consultant planners insisting on 'grand plans' for the central areas, although this does not account for the slow pace of central areas building itself.[46] This thesis will attempt to consider the twin reconstruction demands made on local authorities by the need for housing and the need for other types of building, and the impact each had on the other. This will also highlight the constraints faced by local authorities in terms of finance, materials and labour, all dictated by central government, and the predicament in terms of central areas reconstruction most towns and cities found themselves in. The impact this had on the reconstruction plans will be explored to see how far these constraints resulted in deviation away from the original planning documents.

The relationship between local authorities and traders is highlighted by the financial aspects of reconstruction, with many traders in blitzed cities presented as being unhappy with reconstruction plans. It tends to be presented that the use of development companies and multiple stores to finance rebuilding gave these companies undue influence over the finished result, particularly in terms of the architectural styles used, to the detriment of local traders. It is also often suggested that traders of all types were the reason for changes to reconstruction plans. While traders certainly did have an influence over reconstruction plans, as local authorities directly consulted with them in replanning, many of the changes seen were due to outside influences, such as the intervention of government departments. This aspect

[46] This is touched on by many researchers, including: Tiratsoo et al, *Urban Reconstruction in Britain and Japan 1945-1955: Dreams, plans and realities,* p.10.

of reconstruction requires further study and the three cities offer the opportunity to do so as some changes made to their plans are attributed to trader influence.[47] Dissent amongst trade groups in blitzed cities appears to be common, but the root cause of this opposition to replanning is not always clear. Hasegawa's work on Bristol suggests that traders were concerned that major changes to city centre layouts would be detrimental to trade.[48]

The loss of freeholds under the reconstruction legislation also appears to have been a bone of contention for many. The latter was brought about by local authorities using compulsory purchase orders to bring all reconstruction areas under single ownership in order to be able to plan and build methodically. It is suggested that this decision pushed central area rents and rates beyond the reach of local traders and allowed the multiple stores to take over. It is not always explicitly stated, but there is a certain assumption that multiple stores had serious influence over local authorities and drove out smaller local traders via reconstruction.[49] This appears to be due to the role of large corporations in the physical rebuilding of city centres, as particularly explored by Flinn in her work, and the use of leasehold rather than freehold tenure for city centre property.[50] However, changes in shopping patterns across the twentieth century demonstrate a more general shift toward the multiple store, with many of the multiple traders present in city centres during the interwar period. Ritschel and Zewiniger-Bargielowska's work on economic planning and constraints during the

[47] Essex and Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* p.159; While and Tait, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* 24/1 (2009), p.82.
[48] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.82, 86
[49] Essex and Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War-Damaged Plymouth 1941-61' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp.159; While and Tait, 'Exeter and the Question of the Physical Legacy of Thomas Sharp', *Planning Perspectives,* 24/1 (2009), p.82.
[50] Catherine Flinn, 'Exeter Phoenix: Politics and rebuilding of a blitzed city', *Southern History,* Vol.30 (2008).

inter- and post-war years again illuminates another potential explanation for trader apathy with the possible equating of planning with a planned economy and the loss of free private enterprise.[51] The complicated relationship between the trader and the local authority needs to be further examined to untangle all of these factors and determine which of them, if any, had an influence on how blitzed cities rebuilt.

Finally, the interwar development of planning and the continuity between inter– and post-war planning must be considered. There is very little consideration given to this subject within the current literature. Instead there tends to be the assumption that the Second World War was the catalyst for comprehensive planning, while creating a window of opportunity for reconstruction at the same time. While this is accurate in some respects, such as the creation of new legislation which allowed for comprehensive redevelopment and closer control of building, it is not in many others. Much of the literature does not fully take into account the activity of many towns and cities in trying to replan during the interwar period. There are often references made to pre-war plans for roads, civic centres and replanning via slum clearance in many of the towns and cities, but their significance and influence on post-war planning is left unexplored.[52] Local authorities had a statutory duty prior to the Second World War to survey their areas in terms of housing and future development and created a planning scheme accordingly. This resulted in both the building of local authority housing to address the slum problem virtually everywhere and the replanning of roads and civic amenities by many local authorities. The three South Western cities

[51] Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning,* pp.4-5, 21-25, 31-39*;* Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Austerity and the Conservative Party after 1945', *The Historical Journal,* 37/1, 1994, pp.173-197

[52] Adams and Larkham, 'Bold Planning, Mixed Experiences' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp.140-141; Brian Chalkley and Brian Goodridge, 'The 1943 Plan for Plymouth: Wartime vision and post-war realities' in Brian Chalkley, David Dunkerly and Peter Gripaios *Plymouth: Maritime city in transition,* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1991), pp. 62-81; Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain', *Planning Perspectives,* 18/3, 2003, pp. 177-179.

all had plans in place prior to the outbreak of war and were therefore well aware of the problems which needed addressing in each city.

In addition to this, many of the interwar councillors and committee members who made these decisions were still present in wartime and post-war, and could therefore bring with them the knowledge and expertise gained through interwar projects. Likewise, the interwar engineers and architects who designed and executed such projects were also still in-post, but this is also frequently unacknowledged and unexplored. This is particularly notable in David Adams' work on Birmingham which does not acknowledge the role of the city's engineer, Herbert Manzoni, in creating interwar plans for the city or the influence of the 1912 plan for the city on replanning in Birmingham as a whole.[53] Likewise, Coventry's plan was also based on an existing scheme for redevelopment drawn up by the city's architect, Donald Gibson, during the late 1930s and completed in 1940 ahead of the blitz. This latter point has become better acknowledged in recent years, such as in John Grindrod's *Concretopia,* but the acknowledgement of the influence of this plan is absent from earlier work such as Tiratsoo and Hasegawa.[54] Reference is also occasionally made to the continuity of local authority staff between the inter- and post-war periods, such as that at Coventry, but again the potential impact of this on post-war reconstruction is not fully examined.[55]

The continuity of council and committee members, who debated the plans and made the major decisions, is not considered at all in much of the literature. This can result in conclusions being draw about the nature of the plans and planners such as

[53] Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City', *Planning Perspectives*, 26/2 (2011), p.238.
[54] John Grindrod, *Concretopia*, pp.103-106.
[55] Alan Lewis, 'Planning Through Conflict: Competing approaches to the preparation of Sheffield's post-war plan', *Planning Perspectives,* 28/1, 2013, pp.27-49; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp.8-9.

Larkham's conjecture that many plans were civic 'boosterism' intended to focus attention on the towns and cities in question rather than being serious reconstruction blueprints.[56] This fails to recognize that there may have been real urban nuisances to address. By studying the progress of planning as a profession during the interwar period and the growth of planning and housing legislation, we can better understand how local authorities and central government approached reconstruction, and how the general public may have understood planning as a subject. This thesis will therefore examine first the interwar progress of planning in the three South Western cities in order to assess what impact this may have had on their tackling of post-war reconstruction.

Sources and Existing Research on the South Western Cities

The towns and cities featured in this study have only a small body of existing research, with Plymouth's reconstruction the best documented. Plymouth, along with Coventry, was considered a flagship reconstruction plan and its city centre is one of the most complete building projects based on a post-war plan. The use of Patrick Abercrombie as consultant planner in producing the plan sealed this position, as Abercrombie was one of the most prominent planners of the age and his Plymouth plan one of his most celebrated. The relationship between Abercrombie and the city's Lord Mayor, Viscount Waldorf Astor, as the instigators of the Plymouth plan, has therefore become the main theme of the existing research into Plymouth's reconstruction.[57]

[56] Larkham, 'Remaking Cities', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24/5 (1997), p.742.
[57] Brayshay and Essex, 'Vision, Vested Interests and Pragmatism', *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4 (2007), pp.417-441; Gordon Cherry, 'Lessons from the Past: Abercrombie's Plymouth' *Planning History,* 11/3 (1989), pp.3-7.

It is suggested that Astor was the instigator of Abercrombie's involvement with the city by insisting that he was the best person for the job and securing his services through a personal acquaintance with the planner. This suggestion appears to have originated with Crispin Gill's *Plymouth: A new history,* which deals with reconstruction of the city in its last chapter. Gill gives a reasonable overview of the reconstruction of the city and it appears that his work has been widely used by other authors as an introduction to the city's post-war fortunes.

Gill's work evidently influenced the planning historian and theorist Gordon Cherry, who makes reference to several ideas expressed by Gill in his 1989 article on the replanning of Plymouth. These include Astor's importance in bringing Abercrombie into Plymouth's planning framework and to Abercrombie's influence on the replanning of the city. Gill's work is also evident in Cherry's description of Plymouth's urban problems in the interwar period and the solutions that the *Plan for Plymouth* proposed, referring to the problems of overcrowding and congestion and the creation of a focused centre to the city.[58] Cherry's article is more concerned with the similarities and differences in the planning process of the late-1940s compared with that of forty years later than the actual creation and execution of the post-war reconstruction. As a result he gives no indication of how the planning process was undertaken beyond commenting that modern planners have to walk a finer line with public opinion compared to the 1940s.[59] The major contribution of his article is therefore the idea of there being a small knot of influential 'actors' within the *Plan for Plymouth.*

[58] Gordon Cherry, 'Lessons from the Past: Abercrombie's Plymouth', *Planning History,* 11/3 (1989), pp.3-7.
[59] Cherry, 'Lessons from the Past', *Planning History,* 11/3 (1989) p.6.

The work of Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, both geographers with the University of Plymouth, focuses particularly on the idea of an 'actor network' driving Plymouth's reconstruction planning. Essex and Brayshay suggest that *Plan for Plymouth* was the work and vision of a very small group of people, and this resulted in a plan which was "visionary and idealistic" rather than reflecting the needs of the city's citizens. Their work looks at the key figures of Astor and Abercrombie and the network of influential individuals they had contact with, such as George Pepler, the geographer Dudley Stamp and the architect William Crabtree, and the influence this may have had on planning in the city.[60] The assertion that the plan was the product of a few influential figures fits with the suggestion found within many works on reconstruction that the planning process was 'top down' and did not take into account the views of local people. Essex and Brayshay suggest that consultation with traders and the public was carefully managed and restricted, which resulted in the Plan for Plymouth being unpopular with traders and citizens. They state that the later compromises and changes to the plan were made to appease the voices of dissent.[61] However, Essex and Brayshay also refer to the objections of the Ministry of Town and Country planning to the Plymouth plan but do not explore what impact these objections may have had on the execution of the plan. They also state in their article within *The Blitz and its Legacy* that the Ministry felt unable to insist on dramatic changes to the plan, such as abandoning the new street layout, as they recognised the importance of the plan to the city as a whole, contradicting their assertion that the plan was not popular within the city.[62] Essex and Brayshay make reference to the problems created by the Town and Country Planning Act 1944, which was meant to

[60] Essex and Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interests and Pragmatism: Who remade Britain's blitzed cities?' *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4 (2007), pp.417-441.
[61] Ibid, pp. 426-427.
[62] Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961' in *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, p.161.

provide a framework for reconstruction, but again do not fully explore the impact that these had on Plymouth's plan or reconstruction.[63] Their work is therefore useful as a starting point for identifying the key figures in designing the blueprint for post-war Plymouth and the roles they played. This immediately engages with the themes of the planner's role and 'top-down' planning, which are important to the subject of reconstruction as a whole, and give a platform for testing the idea that the city's citizens were not fully included in the planning process. Essex and Brayshay's work also helps to identify areas which need further work, such as the role of central government, in shaping and changing the city's plans.

Bristol's reconstruction has received some attention with its use as a case study in Junichi Hasegawa's work on blitzed cities, but no extensive body of literature exists.[64] Bristol's decision not use a consultant planner in its reconstruction appears to be one of the reasons why little published work on Bristol exists, as many works focus on the work of consultant planners and their role in reconstruction. Hasegawa's work centres on the lengthy consultation process undertaken by the Planning and Public Works Committee (later the Planning and Reconstruction Committee) and the conflicts which arose with the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and local traders. The replanning was undertaken by the City Engineer, who had been in-post during the interwar period and had helped to shape the city's earlier planning schemes.[65] The use of an existing member of local authority staff and the extensive consultation process undertaken by the committees overseeing planning and reconstruction make Bristol the antithesis of some reconstruction themes. It is often suggested that the use of outside planning consultants and a lack of consultation with local people led to

[63] Ibid, pp.162-163.
[64] Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City,* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992).
[65] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.18, 69.

conflicts between corporation and citizen. Bristol's approach should therefore allow for the testing of this theory, and Hasegawa's findings suggest that it did not avoid the conflicts seen elsewhere. The same bitter fights with city traders are seen in Bristol as in other cities over the changing of land use and the redesigning of the shopping areas.

The published literature for Exeter is minimal and approaches the subject from very specific viewpoints. The use of Thomas Sharp, a prominent town planner in the interwar and post-war periods, as the city's consultant planner has resulted in Exeter being referred to in research focusing on Sharp's work. However, the city tends to be referred to in passing and there is very little published material which deals with the city's planning and reconstruction process. There are also a number of further unpublished studies, but these are written from a technical standpoint and again do not examine the reconstruction process.

The architectural view is taken by Aiden While and Malcom Tait's work regarding the legacy of Thomas Sharp.[66] While and Tait aim to assess the architectural legacy left on the urban landscape by planners such as Sharp and use Exeter as a case study. This article is one of the few which directly deals with Exeter's reconstruction and Sharp's plan. However, the focus is on Sharp's 'physical legacy' in the cities he planned in contrast to his intellectual legacy in planning, which results in a focus on the architectural treatment of Exeter rather than the process which led to reconstruction. The point of architectural taste has already been referred to as a theme within reconstruction, as the buildings of this era are not appreciated today and the decision to use muted or Modern building styles is often viewed as a

[66] While and Tait, 'Exeter and the question of Thomas Sharp's physical legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* 24/1, (2009), p.77-97.

mistake. While and Tait's work builds on this theme and explores the changing tastes in architecture. They also attempt to examine the changes and compromises made to buildings and their impact.[67] However, While and Tait relied entirely on secondary sources and therefore make a series of erroneous statements around architectural control and trader influence in Exeter. This lack of primary research and restricted number of secondary works, all written from very specific perspectives, results in the repetition of ideas and viewpoints which are not entirely reflective of the city's actual experience, particularly with regard to changes in the design and architectural treatment for the city.

The sources used by While and Tait include two unpublished works by former city engineers: John Brierley and Norman Venning.[68] Venning and Brierley's work concentrates on the technical challenges of rebuilding rather than the decisions behind it, therefore providing very narrow viewpoints on reconstruction. Neither work focuses on the economic constraints facing the city, dealing purely with the architectural and engineering challenges. In addition to these works, While and Tait used a series of reports written for Exeter City Council, English Heritage and Land Securities regarding recent redevelopment in Exeter, which again concentrate on the architectural value of the buildings rather than the process which produced them. While and Tait's article serves as an example of how the accepted narrative for reconstruction can be perpetuated. It does, however, provide several points for further investigation as the lack of architectural control and the zoning of areas for

[67] Ibid, pp.90-92.
[68] Devon Heritage Centre, Norman Venning, 'The Reconstruction of the Central Areas of Exeter 1945-1965', Typescript, 1977; John Brierly, 'Exeter, The Reconstruction of a City 1939-1965', unpublished MA Thesis (Architecture), University of Manchester, 1980.

particular purposes are often cited as failings in reconstruction. Their work also ties in with the themes of 'top down' planning and the planner's role in reconstruction.

The work of Todd Gray on Exeter in the 1940s can further demonstrate this point, although the work was not designed to be a study of reconstruction in Exeter, and as such only a small portion is devoted to this subject.[69] Gray made extensive use of the Town Clerk's papers, which had not been exploited previously as a source and contain correspondence regarding the early stages of reconstruction planning and the clearing of bombed sites. These can produce a damning picture of the Council's attitude towards the city's remaining urban fabric and support the view that those in charge of reconstruction were little interested in preserving the old and familiar urban patterns. Gray also utilised the local newspapers to demonstrate the concern of some citizens regarding the clearance of damaged buildings. However, the same newspapers are also used to demonstrate that some portions of the population actively supported a 'clean sweep' approach. In this sense Gray is one of the few researchers to acknowledge that there was active support for redevelopment even though there was also some sentimentality for that which had been lost.

The most interesting work on Exeter is the unpublished MA thesis of Catherine Flinn, 'Overlooked Constraints', which explores the financial constraints and challenges facing blitzed cities. Flinn argues that blitzed cities were cut off from capital project finance by the Investment Programmes Committee and it was this that caused the majority of delays and challenges in reconstruction.[70] The Investment Programme Committee decided the allocations of government spending for all investment and capital projects and Flinn argues that it deliberately starved blitzed cities of funding to

[69] Todd Gray, *Exeter in the 1940's: War, Destruction and Rebirth* (Exeter: Mint Press, 2004).
[70] Catherine Flinn, 'Overlooked Constraints: The reconstruction of blitzed city centres in Britain 1945-55', Unpublished MA thesis, Oxford Brooks University (2007).

rebuild. The Committee directed spending instead toward industry and other projects which could improve the nation's export market; central areas reconstruction was not considered profitable and was therefore neglected. In addition to this, the ministries responsible for central areas reconstruction were not represented on the Committee, and therefore had no influence on allocations of money and materials.[71] Flinn uses Exeter as a case study to demonstrate the impact this had on local authorities in blitzed cities and the reconstruction plans they had prepared. Her main finding is that the use of development companies became increasingly important to blitzed cities, such as Exeter, as they were able to raise the finance to build new property.[72]

Where Flinn's work is important is the highlighting of financial constraints on building, as it appears that this was the principal factor in the delays and challenges of reconstruction. The lack of allocations of both finance and materials to blitzed cities in the first five years of peace resulted in exceedingly slow progress on central areas reconstruction in virtually all blitzed cities. The exceptions appear to have been Liverpool and London, where allocations were made as it was felt that these cities could contribute to the export market.[73] Likewise, the majority of changes made to city plans were on financial grounds and the changes made by central government departments were generally made citing the same reasons. The constraints on finance are often referenced in reconstruction literature, but the impact has not been fully explored by anyone other than Flinn.

The sources for this thesis proved plentiful, with a range of local and national records available. The records of the three local authorities have not been extensively used in the existing research and offered a local perspective on the reconstruction process.

[71] Flinn, 'Reconstruction Constraints' in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp.89-93.
[72] Flinn, *Overlooked Constraints,* unpublished MA thesis, pp.48-50.
[73] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, pp.74.

In particular, the surviving correspondence of Plymouth's Lord Mayor, Viscount Astor, held by the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office provided an excellent insight into the local position on national legislation. Exeter's city records have not be fully untilised in the existing literature, partially because they have not been fully catalogued, and therefore offered a unique perspective on the city's experience of reconstruction.

In addition to the local records, records were sought for the development and retail companies which actually built the new cities. Sadly the records of major retailers, such as Marks and Spencer, for the post-war period had not survived. A similar problem was encountered with the major insurance companies which financed reconstruction, such as Pearl Assurance and Norwich Union, mostly due to the constant restructuring and take-overs in the insurance sector. However, some records were found for the correct period in the archives of Lloyd's Bank and Land Securities. The records of Lloyds did provide a little more detail into the reconstruction process, as the notes collected by J.R Winton for his history of Lloyds Bank had survived and provided some background to the rebuilding process in the provinces.[74] Land Securities have archived a wide selection of their records from the early 1940s onwards, providing a number of sources. There was little surviving correspondence, but Land Securities was able to provide a range of minutes, cuttings and photographs about their involvement in reconstructing the three cities. While these records do not carry much detail about the relationship between the company and the local authorities they dealt with, they do provide a window into the workings of the various development companies which rebuilt blitzed cities.

[74] J.R Winton, *Lloyds Bank 1918-1962* (Oxford, 1982)

Local newspapers provided a further window into the reconstruction process, offering the best window into the opinions and standpoints of local councillors, traders and citizens. Reports of council meetings proved particularly valuable, as these often contained detail that was missing from the official records. The three titles used extensively in this thesis were the *Western Daily Press,* the *Western Morning News* and the *Western Times,* with some supporting material from the *Plymouth Herald,* the *Express and Echo,* and the *Bristol Evening Post*. The three main titles were chosen as they were papers covering not just the cities in question, but the wider region, which allowed for a wider selection of opinions and contrasts with the plans and approaches of surrounding towns. The three papers were also similar in tone, being more centre-right than other local titles, and had wide circulations which reached across a wide spectrum of the local population. In this way, the papers could reflect a viewpoint that was not too biased toward a Labour viewpoint and would reflect the more Conservative elements of the local population better. They would also be the papers that reached the widest audience and would therefore have helped form the opinions of the greatest number of citizens across the local areas.

It is the intention of this research to demonstrate not only the process of reconstruction, but also the continuity of planning development and its political impetus. In order to demonstrate this, this thesis will take a chronological format with each chapter examining a small period of time and the key issues and themes within that period.

The first chapter will deal with the evolution of planning and urban change to 1939, as an understanding of urban problems and the progress of planning is essential to understanding post-war reconstruction and planning. This chapter will

provide the background to the political and social change which shaped the progress of planning through the war years and the first stages of reconstruction. Comprehensive planning is often characterised as a product of the war and war damage, but many of the problems which post-war planning sought to solve, such as housing shortages and traffic congestion, were already under scrutiny in the interwar era. Issues such as public health and the impact of housing on health and education had been debated and confronted with a series of legislative measures from the mid-Nineteenth century onwards. The interwar period saw an intensification of this process, as state control and intervention became more accepted post-First World War. The position and growth of planning during this period therefore led directly to the reconstruction plans of the post-war era. As well as the continuity of planning ideals and methods, there is a political continuity between the interwar and post-war eras at the local level which is also frequently overlooked. The current literature tends to assume that the victory of the Labour party in 1945 also significantly altered the make-up of local authorities and local authority staffs. A closer examination of the situation suggests that there was in fact far more overlap between the two periods than assumed. This chapter with therefore examine the continuity between the interwar and post-war periods and the impacts this may have had on post-war reconstruction in each city.

The second and third chapters will both examine the years from 1940 to 1946, but from different perspectives. The three case study cities all suffered severe war damage during the early years of the war and, along with other blitzed cities, were encouraged to start planning for reconstruction immediately. Reconstruction itself became part of the toolkit for encouraging the wartime morale of the nation, and the national interest in planning grew to an unprecedented level. The second chapter will

look specifically at the reconstruction plans and the people who made them, testing the concept of the master planner and the 'top-down' nature of planning. The place of reconstruction and planning in local life will therefore be explored in this chapter, examining the process of consultation and the ideas of local people for reconstruction. The content of the completed plans and their reception amongst local people will also be examined. This will give the opportunity to test some of the generalisations around reconstruction, such as the role of consultant planners, consultation with local people and organisations and the political nature of reconstruction.

The third chapter will examine the same time period, but looking specifically at the legislative and financial elements of reconstruction. At the political level, the role of national government in encouraging and constraining planning will be examined, with particular reference to the planning legislation of 1944. Pressure was brought on the government by local authorities to deliver new planning legislation under which the blitzed cities could deliver the ambitious schemes asked of them. The way in which central government prioritised such legislation will be examined, along with the economic and financial aspects of reconstruction.

The fourth chapter covers the period 1947-1950. The national financial crisis experienced in these years and the decisions made by the Investment Programmes Committee led to long delays in the commencing of central areas reconstruction, while house-building progressed more slowly than anticipated. These legislative and financial aspects of reconstruction added to both the growing conflicts with land and property owners and the growing disillusionment with reconstruction in the late 1940's. This chapter will examine the impact of these factors on the progress of

reconstruction and public opinion. It will also examine the role of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in delaying reconstruction and altering the plans of the three cities.

The fifth chapter will cover the years 1950 to 1955. In these years central areas reconstruction began to move slowly ahead, while house-building was increased via new subsidies and a relaxation of the restrictions on private building. The three cities finally began to rebuild their centres, but were still constrained by the small allocations of investment and materials allocated for this purpose. This chapter examines how the cities' dealt with these constraints and the demands of the companies which undertook rebuilding. This chapter also reviews the other reconstruction progress made, such as housing, and the reception given to the rebuilt cities.

Chapter One – The Inter-War Period

This chapter will examine the development of town planning and municipal housing to 1939, and the legislation and social change which fuelled this development. The contribution of the inter-war period to town planning, and therefore to post-war reconstruction, is not always fully acknowledged in the existing literature on post-war reconstruction. The impression is often given that town planning as a discipline sprung into existence fully formed in the 1940s. Little consideration is given to the interwar attempts by local authorities to improve the fabric of their towns and cities, sometimes resulting in surprise and puzzlement at the actions of municipal planners and engineers post-war as their plans appear to be a continuation of a previous project.[75] Furthermore, it is also often implied, or assumed, that a new political force was driving reconstruction in the form of the Labour party, and as a result the councillors and local politicians of the interwar era had little influence on the new post-war world.[76] This has the effect of making comprehensive town planning and municipal estate building appear as a distinct post-war bubble. In reality post-war planning was part of a long line of development in planning and urban change, stretching from the changes in fashion and taste which wrought huge changes on the faces of many towns and cities during the 17th and 18th centuries, through the rapid growth of urban centres during the Victorian era and the growing awareness of the urban problems which came with it.[77]

The inter-war period saw the first serious, co-ordinated efforts to alleviate the problems of slum living and congestion in towns and cities. Inter-war developments

[75] For example see David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives,* 26/2, (2011), pp.237-260.
[76] Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-1955: Myths and reality', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1, 2000, pp.31-36.
[77] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Pelican, 1968); Patrick Geddes, *City Development* (London: 1904); A.R Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and in Practice* (London: Bemros & Sons, 1905).

in housing, planning and the laws relating to them are therefore crucial to understanding post-war reconstruction and planning. Many of the principles in housing and planning used in the post-war period were developed during the inter-war period, while planning gained credence and respect as a profession. The neglect of inter-war developments also disregards the influences of the garden city movement, the long history of housing reform and the influence of the Modernist movement on both inter-war and post-war attitudes to housing and the built environment as a whole. This chapter will seek to uncover the line of continuity in planning which runs between the inter-war and post-war periods.

The Roots of Planning

The roots of modern town planning can be found in the massive urban growth of the nineteenth century. The rapid increase in urban populations throughout the century left local authorities with a legacy of overcrowded and unfit dwellings in the twentieth century. In addition to this, the original street patterns of towns and cities became increasingly inadequate for the needs of the twentieth century, particularly with the advent of the motor car. The cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all follow these patterns of urban growth and change, and experienced similar problems in terms of slums and public health during this period.[78]

[78] City and County of the City of Exeter, *Housing*: *Opening of the 2000th post-war municipal* house (Exeter: 1937); Plymouth City Council, *A Social Survey of Plymouth* (London: King & Son, 1935); Bristol Record Office (BRO hereafter), InfoBox 35/43, Keith J. Shilleter, 'Housing Reform, 'Garden Suburbs' and Early Town Planning at Bristol', typescript, undated.

The first decades of the nineteenth century saw a population explosion, with the overall population growing by over 4.5 million between 1801 and 1831.[79] At the same time agricultural depression and the growth of industry resulted in an unprecedented migration of rural populations to urban areas to seek employment and better wages. The consequence was the sudden expansion of towns and cities, with attendant pressures on housing and amenities. Development at this time was uncontrolled and unchecked, with private property sacrosanct and control over the built environment negligible. While towns and cities had grown slowly and steadily, this had been a manageable situation and nuisances, such as rubbish, foul water and overcrowding, had been considered controllable.

However, the expanding urban population made the situation untenable, resulting in serious overcrowding and rising rates of infectious diseases such as typhus, typhoid and T.B.[80] The demand for housing resulted in the building of small, cheap houses which often lacked basic features, such as proper foundations or sanitation. [81] Existing houses were subdivided, resulting in overcrowding as houses designed for one family began to house one family per room. Open spaces were infilled, creating narrow lanes and enclosed courts that combined with the lack of sanitation and drainage to create a breeding ground for infectious diseases.

The legislation of the nineteenth century took the first steps towards tackling the problems of slums, overcrowding and sanitation, but shied away from large-scale

[79] 1831 Census Abstract, via www.visionofbritain.org.uk, accessed on 13/10/14.
[80] William Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning: A study in economic and social history of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1954), pp. 48-50; Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations: A history of working class housing 1780-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), pp.85, 102-103.
[81] John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978), pp.86-87; Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp.92-95; Richard Reiss, *The Home I Want* (London: Batsford, 1919), pp.11-13.

public intervention. The 1832 cholera epidemic prompted a number of investigations and surveys into conditions in towns and in particular the condition of working class housing.[82] In addition to this, the introduction of civil registration for births, marriages and deaths had provided local authorities and central government with reliable statistics on birth and death rates for the first time.[83] These exposed the impact of overcrowding, poverty and poor housing on public health. The Public Health Act of 1848 was a response to the conditions revealed and sought to provide proper drainage, sewerage and water supplies and to tackle 'nuisances', which included unfit housing.[84]

However, the act was permissive rather than compulsory and therefore ineffective. Comprehensive legislation which compelled local authorities to deal with sanitation and nuisances was not passed until 1875, with the Public Health Act of that year. This Act compelled municipal corporations to address nuisances and provide adequate water, sewerage and drainage services. The Act also made it compulsory for all new dwellings to be built with a water supply and proper drainage, which had been lacking in the many of the cheapest working class dwellings.

The period between the 1848 and 1875 Public Health Acts saw a flurry of investigations into housing conditions which revealed the full extent of the housing problem. From 1875 the government passed a series of housing acts to tackle the problem. The Artisans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act 1875 gave local

[82] For example, Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain,* 1842.

[83] While these statistics were more reliable than any attempt to survey parish records, the early civil registers are notoriously incomplete as failure to register an event carried no penalty until 1875 with the implementation of the Births & Deaths Registration Act 1874. The onus was also on the registrar to actively find and record the events in his district. It was not made the responsibility of the persons present at a birth or death to report the event until 1875.
See Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp.101-103; Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, pp. 50-51

[84] Cherry, *Cities and Plans,* pp.23-27.

authorities the power to buy and clear slum areas for rebuilding, but did not provide any financial framework to do so. Authorities had to raise the money for buying land themselves and it was expected that the building of new dwellings would be undertaken privately. Unsurprisingly, local authorities were reluctant to take on the high costs of acquiring and clearing land.[85] The Housing of the Working Classes Act 1885 partly corrected this by giving local authorities the power to raise loans against buying land for the construction of working class housing and the power to close dwellings unfit for habitation. The Act also made landlords responsible for the upkeep of their property and for the health of their tenants. This was the first of many acts relating to working class housing passed between 1885 and 1903, which slowly extended the powers available to local authorities.[86] Under them local authorities could enforce landlord responsibilities for the repair and upkeep of properties and, if necessary, undertake repair work and charge the work to the landlord if they proved uncooperative. Local authorities were also empowered to close and demolish properties if landlords refused to make repairs, although this clause was not widely used as it often exacerbated housing shortages.[87]

The significance of these acts was the increasing role played by local authorities in the provision and control of dwellings, and the responsibilities that authorities acquired in terms of the condition of towns. Improvements and phases of intense redevelopment had characterised earlier periods, such as the mid-eighteenth century, but this was the first time that there was a compulsion to ensure that urban

[85] Ibid pp.42-43.
[86] Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, pp. 57-58; Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp.290-294.
[87] Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.58; Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, pp.102-106; Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp.293-294.

areas were well-maintained and healthy.[88] It reflected the growing concern over the health and condition of the population, in particular the working classes, and the impact that this could have on the nation as a whole. This concern continued to characterise town planning and housing provision throughout the inter-war period.

A New Model for Building

The early legislation dealt solely with housing rather than wider urban planning. The idea of town planning began to gain credence from the 1890s onwards, particularly after the publication of Ebenezer Howard's influential garden city concept.[89] There had been growing interest in 'model dwellings' throughout the century and the creation of urban conditions that were the antithesis of the nineteenth century town became the foremost aim.[90] Howard's garden cities appeared to offer the perfect combination of green space, fresh air and small populations, and quickly became established as the blueprint for new housing. The planning of towns was also gaining credence internationally, with Germany in particular leading the way in rational planning.[91]

A number of organisations emerged prior to the First World War which helped to spread and popularise the new planning ideas, such as the Garden City Association and the Town Planning Institute, while organisations such as the National Housing Reform Council and the Association of Municipal Corporations

[88] See Robert Newton, *Eighteenth Century Exeter* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1984), for an example of eighteenth century change and development.
[89] Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow: A peaceful path to real reform* (London: Swan Sonnenschien, 1898).
[90] Bryan Nicholls, 'The Economic and Social Power of Two Landed Families in Nineteenth Century Rural Devon with Particular Reference to Their Provision of Labourers Housing', (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Exeter, 1996), pp.100-102.
[91] Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, pp.177-178; Anthony Sutcliffe, 'Britain's First Town Planning Act: A review of the 1909 achievement', *Town Planning Review,* 59/3 (1988), p.290.

lobbied for comprehensive planning powers. Planning conferences became a common feature of the years between 1900 and 1914 with the NHRC, the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Institute of Town Planning all hosting national and international town planning events. The growing interest in planning and housing is evident in both the frequency of these events and the increased pressure on government to produce national legislation and guidelines for future development.[92]

A new architectural aesthetic also emerged at the turn of the century in the form of the Arts and Crafts movement. The movement's emphasis on rational design and vernacular-inspired architecture offered a refreshing alternative to both the ubiquitous terrace house and the ornate public architecture which characterised the late-Victorian era. The idea of using vernacular and traditional styles and materials was not unique to the Arts and Crafts movement, but could be found internationally. In countries as diverse as Spain, the USA and Sweden a rediscovering of the traditional could be found, and these in turn influenced British building styles.[93] The Arts and Crafts and vernacular building styles became the template for model dwellings and for the new garden city-inspired suburban estates, particularly after the influential Arts and Crafts architectural practice of Unwin and Parker was selected to build the first garden city of Letchworth.[94] The combination of rational planning and vernacular architecture became the blueprint for British urban development in the first half of the twentieth century.

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[92] PWDRO, Plymouth City Council: Special Purposes Committee Minutes, 24 June 1909, 23 June 1910; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Parliamentary Committee, August and December 1909; Exeter City Council Minutes: Parliamentary Committee, August 1910; Exeter City Council Minutes: Town Planning Committee, May 1911; Exeter City Council Minutes: Town Planning Committee, July 1912.

[93] Glancey, *The Story of Architecture*, p.164; See appendices E & F for local examples – figs.46, 74 & 75

[94] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB hereafter), 'Sir Raymond Unwin (1863-1940)' http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36613 - accessed January 2015.

The first town planning act was passed in 1909, giving local authorities some control over development for the first time. Exeter and Plymouth City Councils both embraced the new legislation and began to draw up plans to improve the built environment, demonstrating that the new powers were welcomed by local authorities. Plymouth's plans were more modest than those of Exeter and were mostly aimed at providing more housing. However, the city did also plan a new museum, library and civic centre as part of their scheme.[95] Exeter went a step further, employing one of the few professional planners of the era, Thomas Mawson, to produce a plan for rebuilding large parts of the city centre. The plan would have provided a new civic centre and would have involved knocking down most of the buildings in the centre of the city, including much of the existing High Street, and rebuilding them. Mawson's plan also provided a new and improved Queen Street Station, improvements to the city centre parks and new educational facilities.[96] The city was considering building a new library at this time, as the City Librarian had secured a grant from the Carnegie Trust, and this was factored into the plan.[97] Mawson's proposal were approved by the City Council just prior to the First World War and were as sweeping in their scope as the post-1945 reconstruction plan of Thomas Sharp.[98]

Bristol, in contrast, was slow to make use of the new legislation and there is no evidence of any plans for city improvement prior to the First World War. The city had received a bequest of £50,000 from a local philanthropist in 1910 and the city's

[95] PWDRO, 1648/120 Special Purposes Committee Minutes 23 May 1907; The National Archives (TNA hereafter), HLG 6/700 (Maps and Plans), Plans for the City Museum and Library, City Courts and Charles Churchyard, 1910.
[96] Thomas Mawson, *Exeter of the Future: A policy of improvement within a period of 100 years* (London: Thomas H Mawson & Sons, 1913).
[97] DHC, John B. Whitton, 'A History of Libraries in Exeter, in Particular the Exeter City Library', typescript, 1970, pp. 35-36.
[98] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes 1914, 'A meeting of the council in committee' to consider 'housing and town planning', 13 October 1914.

Liberal councillors proposed building a low-density estate of 400 houses for the working classes.[99] The scheme was delayed by the council on grounds of cost, and with the outbreak of the War the proposal was quietly dropped. The outbreak of the First World War also interrupted the planning and building work in Exeter and Plymouth, forcing them to postpone their schemes.

The Impact of War and the Legislation of the Interwar Era

The First and Second World Wars both raised questions around the form of the post-war world and the state of society. In both cases the wars caused all sectors of society to scrutinize the condition of the nation and how it served its citizens, particularly the poorest. Prior to the outbreak of the Great War, Britain had experienced social unrest, as expressed by the Suffragette movement and the Coal Crisis of 1909. These issues provided the backdrop for wartime consideration of societal reform and reconstruction. They were emphasized further by wartime wage strikes in a number of industries and the rent strikes seen in some cities. The latter were in protest at the spiralling rents caused by the increase in population in some industrial areas due to the influx of war-workers and a more general housing shortage. The rent strikes led to the Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act of 1915 which fixed rents at the 1914 level, reinforcing the need for housing reform.[100]

The increased role of the state during the war made the idea of state intervention in matters such as housing more acceptable to both the public and

[99] BRO, InfoBox 35/48, Shilleter, 'Housing Reform', p.4.
[100] Cherry, *Cities and Plans,* pp.82-83

government, paving the way for further legislation to ameliorate urban conditions.[101] The creation of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1917, headed by Christopher Addison, to consider how Britain should plan for economic and social improvement post-war demonstrated this change in attitude.

The provision of housing was quickly established as a high priority issue which affected a high proportion of British people. There had been a slow-down in building prior to the war and the hiatus of building during the war itself had left the nation with an estimated housing deficit of 800,000 dwellings.[102] The housing shortage was so acute that it affected middle class as well as working class families, with newly-married couples often unable to set up their own homes. The estimated shortage of dwellings only represented the number of dwellings needed to give every family a separate home and did not include the need for slum clearance. A major programme of house building was therefore required post-Armistice and housing took on a key role in national reconstruction. This situation was repeated after the Second World War when war damage and the disruption of building created another shortage of homes. The experiences of the interwar period informed the housing policies of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth during the 1940s, with their interwar estates providing examples of both good and bad practice.

The housing issue also expressed the nineteenth-century concerns around housing and public health. The problems of overcrowding and slum dwellings and the attendant difficulties with health, education and other societal problems still remained. Many working class conscripts were found to be in poor health and unfit to serve,

[101] Ibid; Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp.308-309.
[102] John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978), p.217; Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1955), p.43.

something which had also been noted by medical officers during the Boer War, underlining again the need to tackle the perceived causes of this.[103] There had been growing alarm from the turn of the century regarding the perceived decline of the nation and the perpetuation of physical and mental weaknesses, which resulted in education and health being the two major concerns of the reconstruction committees. The creation of the Ministry of Health in 1918 demonstrated the serious anxiety which the health of the nation produced. The Ministry became responsible for housing and town planning and oversaw the schemes produced by local authorities.[104]

The result of these concerns around housing and the urban environment was the 'homes fit for heroes' campaign created by the wartime coalition government. 'Homes fit for heroes' met the need for a campaign which could appeal to a wide range of voters and addressed more than just the issue of housing. The provision of housing tackled a real problem for many families while also dealing with an area of wartime unrest amongst the working classes. The campaign name also suggested a reward for war service and would therefore appeal to the newly enfranchised sectors of the population. The coalition was returned to power and embarked on the reconstruction policy as promised. The result was the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919, which gave local authorities their widest set of powers and obligations to date.[105]

The 1919 Act brought the state fully into the process of town planning and housing provision. It was agreed that to provide the number of houses needed, and more importantly to provide them to all income groups, significant state intervention was

[103] Patricia Garside, 'Unhealthy areas; Town planning, eugenics and the slums 1890-1945', *Planning Perspectives,* 3/1, 1988, pp.29-30; Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilisation 1919-1939* (London: Penguin, 2010), pp.97-98.
[104] A.J.P Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (London: Book Club Associates, 1977), p.147.
[105] Cherry, *Cities and Plans,* pp.83-84

needed. The Act required urban district and borough councils covering populations of 20,000 persons or more to survey their housing needs and produce a plan to meet these.[106] Housing standards were laid down for local authority builds by the Tudor Walters Report, specifying floor space, ceiling heights and layouts for new homes. All domestic building was subject to density standards, with a density of twelve houses to the acre becoming the standard for most areas. In rural areas densities dropped to eight per acre and in inner-city areas up to twenty per acre were permitted to allow for the minimal movement of some urban populations.[107]

The 1919 Act provided a financial framework for house building, making provision for local authorities to take loans and raise money via local rates for building. The Act did not provide subsidies for building but did make the exchequer responsible for any costs beyond the penny rate. However, the financial framework did apply to a range of property types in order to stimulate house building and address the general housing shortage.[108] This was the first time government funding was made available for this purpose.

The financial assistance offered by the 1919 Act was generous, with no upper limit to the monies provided by the exchequer to meet scheme expenses over the penny rate. However, after an initial post-Armistice boom, the economy went into recession as European markets recovered and the demand for British goods dropped. The effect of the recession on house building, coupled with shortages of materials, was to

[106] Barry Cullingworth and Vincent Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK* (13th edition, London: Routledge, 2002), p.16; Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, pp.199-200.
[107] Local Government Board, *Report of the committee on Building Construction in Connection With the Provision of Dwellings for the Working Classes in England and Wales, and Scotland* (London; HMSO, 1918) – commonly known as the Tudor Walters Report.
[108] Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p.44; Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.84.

triple the cost of building the average home.[109] The government's generous finance package for house building quickly became unaffordable and had to be altered with an amendment act in 1923. This Act provided a flat subsidy per house and building standards were also amended slightly to allow for marginally increased densities and a reduced floorspace in order to keep building costs to a minimum.[110]

The subsidies for housing were changed again in 1924 when the first Labour government came to power. The Housing Act 1924, increased the subsidies for housing and introduced new standards for local authority housing. Under the Act, all local authority houses had to be built with a separate bathroom instead of providing a bath in the scullery. The latter had been a frequently employed method of providing bathing facilities as cheaply as possible in working class housing and had been found to be widely disliked. The provisions of the 1924 Act remained in place until 1930 and some 500,000 houses were built under it.[111] The Acts of 1923 and 1924 also made the subsidies available to private developers building working-class housing in order to encourage house-building as much as possible.

The South Western Response

It has been suggested that local authorities were reluctant to build under the 1919 Act, and where they did build the houses were aimed not at the working class, but the middle class.[112] This view appears to be based on the way in which the 1919 Act was written, with its emphasis on new building rather than the amelioration of existing

[109] Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, p.222; *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Council', 30 July 1919; *Western Times,* 'Exeter Council', 10 March 1920; 'Housing', 3 May 1920;
[110] Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.86.
[111] Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.86; Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, pp.227-229.
[112] Garside, 'Unhealthy Areas: Town planning, eugenics and the slums 1890-1945', *Planning Perspectives,* 3/1 (2007), p.30.

slums areas, and the assumption that these 'homes fit for heroes' were aimed at returning servicemen rather than the working class in general. Yet the attitude of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth's councils suggests that this was not the case in the South West. The three cities built extensively during the interwar period and used the legislation in a number of innovative ways in order to meet the needs of their citizens.

In the immediate years after the Armistice, the three cities all faced similar problems with overcrowding, housing shortages and unemployment. Bristol appears to have endured the most in terms of unemployment as a number of the city's industries suffered in the post-Armistice years. The coal-fields on the city's peripheries all felt the national downturn in the coal industry and all but one, Coalpit Heath Colliery, had closed by 1939.[113] Other industries had boomed under wartime demand, but felt the contraction of trade in the early post-Armistice years keenly. Bristol's burgeoning aircraft industry suffered a dearth of orders in these years and the shipyards saw a slowdown in work. The city had been a centre for munitions manufacture during the war and other civil industries, such as the boot and motor cycle factories, had switched to war production. The end of the war therefore saw a decline in orders in these industries.[114]

Plymouth, like Bristol, experienced an initial downturn as the city was heavily reliant on the Naval dockyard and was host to both Army and RAF bases. The city had also moved extensively toward war production in some industries.[115] Exeter appears to have been the most cushioned from unemployment as it had a mixed economy that did not rely extensively on any one industry. Exeter's major foundry

[113] Bryan Little, *The City and County of Bristol* (London: Werner Laurie, 1954), p.298.
[114] Ibid, pp. 295-299.
[115] Crispin Gill, *Plymouth: A New History 1603 to the Present Day* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1979), pp.172-174, 182-185.

and engineering firm, Willey's, had moved to war production, but its niche as a producer of coin-meters ensured it did not experience a downturn post-Armistice.[116]

All three cities had housing problems, with shortages of accommodation and areas of unfit housing common to all three. Bristol and Plymouth had both experienced influxes of war-workers which exacerbated the existing housing shortages and overcrowding. Bristol was chosen during the war to be the site for one of the Ministry of Munitions experiments in housing provision with houses built at Avonmouth in 1915 for munitions workers.[117] This provided an example of corporation housing in the city and demonstrated how such housing might solve the problems of overcrowding and the slums.

The political situation in each city in 1919 was a Conservative majority council with the Liberal party as the second party; Labour representation was still minimal. The approach amongst these Conservative-led councils to reconstruction suggests that attitudes to housing and welfare had already swung towards a more state-orientated mindset by 1918. The rhetoric of the Ministry of Reconstruction was reflected by the local authorities in all three cities, with plans for large areas of municipal housing approved by the City Councils of Bristol and Exeter prior to January 1919.[118]

The opinions expressed by the housing committees of the cities demonstrated awareness of the dire need for housing and its importance as both a social and political issue. The arguments put forward for building municipal housing included the health and economic benefits for society as a whole and the potential for unrest

[116] W.G Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter* (Revised ed. Stroud: Phillimore, 2004), p.122
[117] BRO, InfoBox 35/48, Shilleter, 'Housing Reform', p.6
[118] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Shortage of Houses; Village suburb scheme approved', 15 May 1918; *Western Times*, '300 Houses for Exeter; Council prepared to proceed at an early date', 2 December 1918

amongst the working classes if the housing problem was not dealt with. The Chairman of Bristol's Housing Extension and Town Planning Committee, Mr E.W. Savory, spoke of the 'thousands of unfit men...who would have been fit to serve their country...if they had been brought up under proper housing conditions' when presenting the Committee's housing proposals.[119] He also stated that the 'well-being of the worker is the well-being of the community' as improved working class health would result in increased efficiency and greater prosperity across the whole of society. The cost of such a scheme was also touched upon via the sanitary reforms of the preceding century, with Savory noting that ratepayers who would have once griped at the cost of water and sanitation works now expected these to be provided as a matter of course. The inference was that once municipal housing was provided and the benefits observed, the same response would be seen.[120] Exeter's mayor, Sir James Owen, expressed the other main argument in favour of municipal housing, stating that poor housing was 'at the bottom of Labour unrest' as well as contributing to other 'sanitary' troubles.[121]

Even if any individual council member doubted the need for municipal housing, the letters published in the local press demonstrated that there was indeed a severe housing shortage. Letters from demobilised servicemen began appearing in Bristol's *Western Daily Press* in January 1919, discussing the problems of finding anywhere to live and the high rents being charged.[122] Similar problems can be found in the letters pages of the Exeter-based *Western Times,* alongside articles detailing court cases

[119] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Shortage: Village suburbs scheme approved', 15 May 1918.
[120] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Shortage: Village suburbs scheme approved', 15 May 1918.
[121] *Western Times,* 'Housing', 26 September 1918.
[122] *Western Daily Press,* 'Correspondence: The Housing Problem', 17 January 1919; 'Correspondence: The Housing Problem', 20 January 1919

dealing with the eviction of tenants.[123] Letters to the Plymouth-based *Western Morning News* demonstrated other problems in the housing market, with complaints at the high rents being asked for flats in Plymouth and the problem of second homes.[124] Some of the correspondence regarding rents was evidently written by people of means, as the letters discussed the lack of facilities, such as a tradesman's lift, and how tiring this will be for the servants.[125]

These letters demonstrate that the housing shortage was affecting all sectors of society, not just the working class. The second homes issue also appeared, with one letter regarding the housing shortage in Cornwall highlighting the fact that many houses in the county were only occupied at weekends or during the summer.[126] The *Western Times* correspondents also highlighted the rural housing problem, with high rents for agricultural workers frequently mentioned in the letters pages and details of housing schemes being undertaken by the more rural local authorities such as Crediton and Ashburton.[127] This latter point demonstrates the widespread nature of the housing shortage as well as the effect of the 1919 Act. The Act required all urban councils with populations of twenty thousand persons or more survey their housing needs, and the actions of the district and town councils across the South West demonstrates the impact of this requirement.

The enthusiasm expressed for the new discipline of town planning between 1900 and 1914 continued, with conferences on housing being held in Plymouth, Exeter and

[123] *Western Times,* 'Our Letter Box: Housing and town planning at Exeter'19 May 1919; 'An Exeter House' 4 December 1919.
[124] *Western Times,* 'Correspondence: Cornwall's Peculiar Housing Difficulty', 18 October 1921;
[125] *Western Morning News,* Correspondence, 'What is a flat?', 29 November 1921.
[126] *Western Morning News,* Correspondence, 'Cornwall's peculiar housing problem', 18 October 1921.
[127] *Western Times,* 'Crediton Housing: Butts Park site recommended by official architect', 27 May 1919; *Western Times,* 'Crediton Housing: Right Hon. George Lambert M.P offers support, 29 April 1919; *Western Times,* 'Ashburton Housing: An inadequate scheme, another inquiry to be held', 30 December 1919 – small pieces on schemes in Exmouth and Totnes are in the same column.

Bristol during 1918 to debate the best methods for providing new housing. These conferences saw extensive representation from local authorities across the region, from the County Councils to the smaller urban district councils, such as Yeovil and Crediton.[128] The reports of the housing schemes under consideration also demonstrate that the ideals of the Garden City and Arts and Crafts movements had influenced ideas about housing within local authorities. Bristol's Housing Committee put forward their plan in May 1918 for 2000 municipal houses arranged in five 'suburban villages...arranged on garden city lines' around the edge of the city.[129] The scheme was expanded to 5000 houses after it was decided that the City Council should build as many houses as possible using the financial provisions of the 1919 Act. Exeter City Council initially proposed a scheme for 300 houses arranged on similar principles, with the land for one scheme of 47 houses already in the Council's ownership.[130] This scheme was increased to 1000 houses in 1919.[131]

Plymouth City Council took longer than Bristol and Exeter to produce a definitive scheme owing to uncertainty over the future of the Naval dockyard. A survey in 1917 suggested that around 3000 houses would be required, but the Council was divided over the validity of this number.[132] The dockyard had expanded considerably under war conditions, with the workforce nearly doubling from just over ten thousand men in 1914 to nearly nineteen thousand in 1918.[133] Similar influxes of workers had been seen in previous conflicts, but once the conflict was over the

[128] *Western Daily Press*, 'Abolition of Slums; The Bristol conference', 2 February 1918; *Western Times*, 'The Housing Problem; South Western conference at Exeter', 26 September 1918; *Western Times*, 'Crediton Council', 4 July 1918.
[129] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's housing shortage: Village suburbs scheme approved', 15 May 1918.
[130] *Western Times*, '300 houses for Exeter: Council prepared to proceed at an early date', 2 December 1918.
[131] City and Council of the City of Exeter, *Housing: The Opening of the 2000th Post-War Municipal House,* p.7.
[132] TNA, HLG48/179 –Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, 'Plymouth: Need for Housing', 23 May 1921, p.1.
[133] Gill, *Plymouth: A New History*, p.172; Walling, *The Story of Plymouth*, p.261.

dockyards tended to contract, leaving many unemployed and prompting a general slump in the local economy. It was feared that this would be seen again and the City Council could find itself liable for the costs of a large housing project they were unable to let. Therefore, the City Council felt it could not plan effectively until the Admiralty had decided whether to maintain the expanded dockyard.[134]

As Exeter and Bristol had already considered their housing plans in 1918, they were able to produce the surveys required by the 1919 Act swiftly and to begin building quickly. Plymouth responded with an initial survey in 1919, but could only give a very broad outline of their intended plans owing to the problems with the dockyard.[135] Plymouth City Council also appears to have been very concerned about the financial package offered by the 1919 Act and evidently thought that the promise to meet costs above the penny rate would not be honoured.[136] They were therefore reluctant to take on the financial responsibility of a large housing project, particularly as the city's uncertain economic future could result in lower rate revenues.

The city later submitted a more defined plan for 4,500 houses in January 1920 as it became clear that the Admiralty would not maintain the wartime workforce.[137] However, the Ministry of Health was not particularly sympathetic to the position Plymouth City Council found itself in and accused the Council of vacillating over housing. This led to an enquiry being held in May 1920 which examined the problems and delays which Plymouth's scheme had experienced. The Inspector found that

[134] TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, 'Survey of Housing Needs 1919'; TNA, HLG 48/179, Letter from Plymouth Town Clerk, R.J Fittall, to the South Western Housing Commissioner re unemployment, 29 October 1919.
[135] TNA, HLG 48/179, Plymouth C.B Housing: General scheme, 'Survey of Housing Needs 1919', p.2.
[136] TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Report by Ministry of Health housing commissioner re progress at Plymouth, 1920, pp.2-3.
[137] Gill, *Plymouth: A New History,* p.176 – the dockyard workforce was reduced from its wartime peak of around 19,000 to 15,837. The number continued to reduce throughout the 1920's to just over 10,000 in 1928.

many of the delays in passing the city's scheme were caused by the Ministry of Health taking many weeks to approve stages of the application process.[138] The City Council was at fault in some instances, but even then it appears that it was the effect of outside forces which created delays. For example, the city had appointed Professor Stanley Adshead, one of the earliest professional town planners, to design the houses and layout for the scheme. However, Adshead's services were in high demand and it appears that he took on more work than he had time for, which created delays in completing each project.[139] The experience of Plymouth anticipated many of the problems faced by all cities when planning for post-Second World War reconstruction. Delays due to the slow processing of planning schemes, concerns over funding and slow progress due to the demands placed on consultant planners can all be found throughout the 1940s.

The 1940s also saw concerns regarding the financial assistance for building and similar concerns can be found with the early municipal schemes. Plymouth's City Council was apprehensive that the Government's assurance that it would bear the costs of any scheme beyond the penny rate would not be honoured. This concern was echoed by some council members in Bristol and Exeter, although here the fears voiced were centred on the length of time the financial support would be available.[140] Bristol City Council expanded its initial plan for 2000 houses to 5000 as it was felt that full advantage of the assistance should be taken while it was on offer. The 1919 Act also allowed councils to raise loans to purchase land and build houses and made

[138] TNA HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Housing Scheme Inquiry 1920 (report from C.E Norton to Christopher Addison, Minister of Health), pp.9-17.
[139] TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Housing Scheme Inquiry 1920 (report from C.E Norton to Christopher Addison, Minister of Health), pp. 9 & 16.
[140] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Finance: Direct labour plan approved', 4 December 1919; *Western Times*, 'Exeter Council: Proposed suspension of housing scheme', 10 March 1920.

provision for funds to be raised via local housing bonds. These bonds were guaranteed by the Government at 6% interest and were designed to allow councils an alternative route for funding new housing.[141] The bonds also had the advantage of offering investors, who were likely to be ratepayers, a stake in the new housing schemes and made the expenditure of local authorities appear at an advantage as an investment rather than a debt.

However, there were concerns expressed in all three councils at the potential ongoing cost to ratepayers, particularly as it was assumed that the schemes would make a loss. Plymouth offered the bonds, but was very negative about their potential, much to the annoyance of the Ministry of Health. The Inquiry of 1920 revealed that the financing of housing was a major concern of the Council and the secondary reason why the city had proceeded so slowly with its scheme. The city had issued bonds, but had stated publicly that they were not likely to sell well and the required funds were unlikely to be raised, thus scuppering their success immediately.[142] However, this negativity was not entirely unfounded as the Government issued their own bonds at the higher rate of 7% in the weeks after the local housing bonds were launched, therefore making the local bonds less attractive.[143]

Exeter initially chose not to use local bonds to raise funds, instead funding their building scheme entirely through loans.[144] It is unclear exactly why they chose to do this, but it is possible that the launch of the Government bonds influenced the decision. The city also had a smaller number of houses to provide and did not have

[141] *Western Times,* 'A Housing Proposal', 20 January 1920
[142] TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Housing Scheme Inquiry 1920, pp.2-8; TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Ministry of Health Housing Progress report Plymouth 1920, p.4.
[143] TNA, HLG 48/179 Plymouth C.B Housing: General Scheme, Housing Scheme Inquiry 1920, p.7.
[144] *Western Times*, 'Exeter and Housing: Money not to be raised by local bonds', 27 March 1920.

high levels of unemployment, and thus had less assistance to pay, which may have made the servicing of loans more affordable than in Bristol and Plymouth. However, it appears that bonds were used in a limited fashion later in 1920, presumably as the general economic climate worsened and relying entirely on loans seemed less practical.[145] Bristol appears to have embraced the bond system more fully than the other two cities and also encouraged private philanthropic schemes run along similar lines.[146]

What is notable is that despite misgivings about funding the building, all three cities made housing provision their priority and the voices of dissent were lost amongst those who felt the issue could not be skirted.[147] The cities also extended their schemes throughout the 1920s, despite the rising costs of house-building in the early part of the decade. The discussion of the early schemes clearly demonstrates the concerns around financial losses. It was noted by members of all three councils that the economic rent of the proposed houses would be beyond the means of many working class families, particularly those who were in the greatest need.[148] Although the 1919 Act stated that the Government would meet costs beyond the penny rate, there was concern expressed that either those in need would not be housed or that the houses would be rented at a large loss. The reports of these council meetings show that initially in 1918 and 1919 all three cities assumed that the houses they were building would be for those of the artisan and lower middle classes, with particular emphasis on the ex-serviceman and his family, rather than the mass of the

[145] *Western Times*, 'Exeter Housing: Ministry requested to render assistance', 31 July 1920.
[146] *Western Daily Press*, 'Local Notes - Municipal Bonds: Bristol's opportunity', 27 December 1919; 'Bristol's Housing Famine: Hopeful action by local firms', 7 November 1923.
[147] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol Council: Housing scheme to cost over three million', 30 July 1919; *Western Times*, 'Exeter Council: Financial difficulties of housing', 4 February 1920.
[148] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Scheme: Position officially explained', 13 December 1920; *Western Times*, 'Exeter Council: Borough rate up and higher district rate coming', 15 September 1920.

working class.[149] The idea of 'filtering up' is often expressed, suggesting that the rhetoric of the government housing policy was absorbed and accepted.[150] This fits with the traditional reading of the 'homes fit for heroes' campaign and the 1919 Act; that it was designed to provide houses for the middle classes rather than the working classes.

However, there was a distinct shift in ideas in the early 1920s, with the emphasis moving toward providing houses for anyone in need regardless of class. There is frequent mention within council reports of the rents for the early houses being beyond the means of the working class, and therefore the housing need remaining as great as ever.[151] The expansion of schemes suggests that the aim was shifting to deliberately building for the working class with the aim of encouraging people to move from the slums to the new estates, rather than just relieving the general housing shortage. To underline the significance of this expansion of housing provision, it must be remembered that the early 1920s were a period of inflating building costs, with materials and labour both in short supply.[152] Instead of retrenching, the three cities all continued building and looked for ways to reduce costs. All three cities appear to have investigated the use of non-traditional building methods, such as building with pre-cast concrete building systems.[153] Exeter was the only city which used these methods in any great quantity, building 294 Laings 'Easi-

[149] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Slums', 13 December 1921; *Western Daily Press,* 'The Bristol Housing Question', 11 June 1918; 'Bristol's Housing Scheme' 12 March 1919.
[150] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Scheme: Debate by City Council', 12 March 1919; 'Bristol Housing Scheme', 13th December 1920; *Western Times*, 'Exeter City Council: Financial difficulties of housing', 4 February 1920; *Western Morning News*, 'Plymouth Slums: Gunpowder or fire as drastic remedy', 13 December 1921.
[151] *Western Daily Press*, 'Housing in Bristol: Slum area conditions', 8 March 1922; *Western Morning News*, 'Plymouth Housing Problems: Council in favour of lower rents', 5 June 1923.
[152] Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.86; Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, p.222.
[153] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Housing', 21 October 1924; *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Council Houses' 7 January 1926

form' concrete houses on its Buddle Lane estate between 1926 and 1928.[154] Bristol examined the possibility of using private building bonds to build working class housing. The system allowed private firms to issue and invest in housing bonds, which would raise funds for organisations similar to the modern housing association to build working class dwellings. The city had some success with this method and used it to supplement the municipal building schemes.[155]

Housing was also prioritised over other types of building, with projects for other types of municipal building put on hold during the early 1920s. Plymouth City Council delayed the building of new schools in 1921 owing to increased building costs and the need for economy.[156] Likewise, Exeter City Council yet again vetoed the building of a new library, which had been under consideration since 1904, on the grounds of economy stating that houses should come ahead of books.[157]

Planning and the local political position

It is notable that the arguments for and against housing provision did not divide along the expected political lines. It was not unusual to find Labour councillors arguing the finer points of housing provision, such as whether all houses should be provided with parlours, but there was a surprising level of consensus over general standards.[158] The need for housing and planning was accepted by all political affiliations. The Garden City layout was accepted by all parties as the best method of building and it was accepted in all quarters that the terrace house had no real place in the modern

[154] City and Council of the City of Exeter, *Housing*, pp.7-9; DHC; Exeter City Council Minutes 1925, Housing Committee, 21 April, 22 September 1925.
[155] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol's Housing Famine: Hopeful action by local firms', 7 November 1923.
[156] *Western Morning News*, 'In Saving Mood: Plymouth Council's economies', 11 January 1921.
[157] DHC, Exeter newspaper cuttings, B/Exeter: Libraries – City Library pre-1944, *Express and Echo*, 'Exeter's New Library: £30,000 building in Rougemont', 20 March 1923.
[158] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Housing Scheme', 27 November 1918

estate. The consensus becomes more striking when the debates around other projects, such as those outlined above, are considered. The debates on school provision in Plymouth did demonstrate a more conventional split between left and right, with the Conservative elements of the Council expressing concern regarding the potential cost of extending educational provision. Labour representatives, however, attacked this as a two-faced policy which damaged the education and prospects of working class children, as this would affect schools in working class wards but not those in wealthier wards.[159] This position was also supported by a number of Liberal councillors. Likewise in Exeter, the library argument faced similar accusations, as the poor library provision in the city was thought to disadvantage the working classes the most.[160] The debates on the cost of the schemes also demonstrated the expected political divisions, as it was more likely that Conservative councillors would express concerns over rate levels.[161]

The political landscape of the interwar years can help illuminate whether 1945 signalled a complete break in the politics of the South Western cities or if it was the natural culmination of gradual changes throughout the interwar period. It has often been assumed that the 1945 election created a clean break with the politics of the interwar and wartime periods, but it is not unusual to find many of the same council personnel in-post during both the inter- and post-war periods. These individuals oversaw both the interwar planning and housing projects and the planning stages for post-war reconstruction. Their experiences of the interwar period and the challenges

[159] *Western Morning News*, 'Council Politics: Party leaders on pending change', 8 January 1921; *Western Morning News*, 'In Saving Mood: Plymouth Council's economies', 11 January 1921.
[160] DHC, Exeter newspaper cuttings, B/Exeter: Libraries – City Library pre-1944, *Western Morning News*, 'New Exeter Library; Governors approve £30,000 scheme', 12 June 1923.
[161] *Western Morning News,* 'Council Politics', 7 January 1921; *Western Daily Press,* 'Letters to the Editor: Bristol Housing Scheme', 5 February 1919; 'Council Politics' 8 January 1921.

and difficulties of interwar building projects could therefore affect and inform the reconstruction process. Likewise, the level of change and continuity in terms of the political affiliation of Members of Parliament can also be used to test the assertion that 1945 signalled a change of political direction for many constituencies. The importance of this question centres on the assertion that the swing towards the Left in 1945 led to the creation of radical reconstruction plans in Labour-led areas and cleared the way for bold housing schemes. That there was a continuity of council personnel between interwar and post-war in the three cities suggests that this picture may be oversimplified and may overlook a process of political and social change between the two periods.

The three cities all reflected the national trend across the interwar period of increasing Labour support and declining Liberal support. The national swell of support for Labour in the late 1920s and its collapse in 1931, leading to the formation of the National Government, is also traceable through the election of councillors and local MP's in all three cities. The growth of the Labour party was most marked in Bristol and was evidently seen as a serious threat by the Conservative and Liberal parties. From 1923 until the outbreak of war, the two parties worked together as the Citizen Party within the city council and fought all municipal elections under this umbrella, rather than as Conservative or Liberal candidates.[162] The Labour party enjoyed growing success in the city throughout the period with steady gains in municipal elections, resulting in strong Labour representation on the City Council. The council was briefly Labour-led in 1937, but Labour lost the majority in the

[162] BRO, Info Box 35/48, Shilliter, 'Housing Reform', p.4.

municipal elections of 1938.[163] The city's five constituencies, Bristol North, East, South, West and Central, further reflected this trend, with Labour MPs returned at least once in four of the constituencies between 1918 and 1935. The constituency of Bristol East returned a Labour MP from 1923 onwards and was represented by Sir Richard Stafford Cripps from 1931 until 1950. The other constituencies tended to switch between parties, with the exception of Bristol West which remained staunchly Conservative from its creation in 1918 until 1997.[164]

The Labour party did not enjoy the same level of success in Plymouth or Exeter, where Labour representation did grow but not to the same extent as in Bristol. Plymouth, rather surprisingly, was strongly Conservative in its political character during the interwar period. The city has been referred to as 'working class with middle class politics', which reflects accurately the working class wards which consistently returned Conservative councillors and MPs.[165] The wellsprings of Labour support were not to be found in the poorest wards but in the more middling wards. The only exception was the ward of St Peters, one of the poorest in the city and the most overcrowded, which returned a Labour councillor in every election from 1925 onwards. The rest of the city's wards showed limited Labour support and tended to demonstrate strong attachment for individuals rather than parties.[166] However, Crispin Gill suggests that the city's Conservative and Liberal councillors saw Labour as more of a threat than this picture suggests, as he states that the two parties followed a model similar to that found in Bristol. Gill argues that the two parties

[163] Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre: A Comparative Study of Bristol, Coventry and Southampton* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992), p.18.
[164]See Appendix A – Bristol council members (compiled from *Western Daily Press* municipal election reports 1920-1938); Little, *The City and County of Bristol*, pp.300-301.
[165] Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, 'Plymouth's Politics' in Brian Chalkley, David Dunkerly & Peter Gripaios, *Plymouth: Maritime City in Transition* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1991), pp.157.
[166] See Appendix C – Plymouth council members (compiled from *Western Times* and *Western Morning News* municipal election reports 1920-1938)

agreed not oppose each other in ward elections; however, they did not form the sort of alliance found in Bristol's Citizen Party.[167] As a result, the Council remained Conservative-led until 1945. Plymouth was almost exclusively represented by Conservative MPs throughout the interwar period. The city had three constituencies, Drake, Devonport and Sutton and returned a Labour MP only once, in the Drake constituency in 1929. The constituency returned to form with a Conservative candidate in the 1931 election. The Devonport and Sutton constituencies returned Conservative MPs throughout the period, although some contests were very close and produced small majorities.[168]

Exeter was also generally Conservative in character in the interwar period, with a smattering of Liberal and Labour support. The city returned one MP to parliament and this seat had been dominated by the Conservative party since 1885 (when the city had been reduced to one MP from its previous two).[169] The council too was Conservative-led, although the city retained a loyal Liberal following in some wards. The Labour party made steady gains from the mid-1920s onwards, but never gained enough support to threaten the Conservative lead in the council. Like Plymouth, some wards showed particular loyalty to certain individuals, which meant that wards could be represented by councillors from all parties at any one time. There were also gains for independent candidates and the Ratepayers Association.[170]

The economic depression of 1920-1921 saw both central government and the local authorities compelled to economise. Local authorities found themselves under

[167] Gill, *Plymouth: A New History*, pp.177.
[168] See Appendix C – Plymouth council members; Gill, *Plymouth: A new history*, p.181; R.A.J Walling, *The Story of Plymouth* (London: Westaway, 1950), p.263.
[169] Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter,* pp.116-117
[170] See Appendix B – Exeter Council Members (compiled from *Western Times* and *Western Morning News* municipal election reports 1920-1938).

pressure from both central government and the public to cut spending, with the latter often expressing their views under the umbrella of ratepayers associations. These groups were common to towns and cities across the UK, and evolved into a political force later in the decade. Exeter in particular saw individuals representing the Ratepayers Association standing in local elections, and the Ratepayers were represented on the council regularly between 1921 and 1938. Ratepayer candidates were also returned in four wards in 1945 and 1946 demonstrating the long-standing appeal of this party in the city.[171] The Ratepayers Association claimed to represent the views of those persons paying local authority rates and generally stood for economy and the protection of middle class interests.

An examination of the national political stage presents a further influence on local attitudes towards economy, public spending and planning; that of economic planning. Alongside the concept of town planning, economic planning was gaining credence and acceptance as a method for tackling both economic and social problems. The dominate concepts of the 'invisible hand of the market' and laissez-faire were discredited by successive economic depressions from the 1870s onwards, with Britain's slowing industrial and economic growth seen as a symptom of poor economic management.[172] The experience of state intervention in economic matters during the First World War had demonstrated that state direction and control could be a positive force within the economy. This realisation reached its zenith with the creation of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1917, which was charged with planning the reconstruction of industry and welfare post-armistice. Initially there was support

[171] See Appendix B – Exeter Council Members.
[172] Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Claredon, 1997), pp.21-23.

for state intervention in industry from the business world, but this dwindled after 1918 with a return to individualistic, laissez-faire thinking about business and economy.

However, the slump of 1920-21 reinvigorated the concept of economic planning within political circles and all parties embraced the idea to some extent. The Labour Party gradually worked towards a concept of a fully planned and state-controlled economy, while the Conservatives advocated a 'self-rule' economy planned by business for business with only light state control. The Liberals sought a middle ground between the two, while the creation of the New Party under Oswald Mosley at the end of the 1920s saw a vision for a planned economy based around high wages and increased home consumption.[173]

These concepts were important as they extended the understanding of 'planning' beyond urban planning to other sectors, which may have had a later bearing on the amorphous idea of 'the planners' during the 1940s. 'Planners' were not just those involved in remodelling towns, but were also those who sought to remodel the economy and ideas around industry and ownership. The Socialist vision of economic planning, with its state ownership of land and industry, was given form by the Labour party after the 1929 economic crash. At this point, the younger, more radical elements of the party saw that a bold policy towards economic planning was required, as the old model of capitalism seemed to be broken and worn out. This policy included the state acquisition of land, heavy industry, the electricity network and shipbuilding, while other industry and business would be directed according to a government economic plan.[174] For the middle- and upper-classes, this would have

[173] Ibid, pp.64-67.
[174] Michael Tichelar, 'The Labour Party, Agricultural Policy and the Retreat from Rural Land Nationalisation During the Second World War', *The Agricultural History Review,* 51/2, 2003, pp.209-211; Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning,* pp.108-109.

represented a threat to their status and values, and may have influenced their views on ‘planners’. The planning of both the interwar years, with its emphasis on the provision of working class housing, and the post-war years may have been viewed as the first step toward state-ownership of industry and the loss of private enterprise. The Ratepayers Associations of the interwar years are as much symptom of the growing unease amongst the wealthier parts of society at increased state intervention in public and private life as they are of the immediate concerns at increased public expenditure.

In addition to the pressure being applied by both central government and groups such as the Ratepayers to economise, local authorities also found themselves under attack from property owners with regard to municipal housing. The local press for all three cities displays increasing correspondence from property owners, both those who rented out property and general owner-occupiers, with regard to rent levels, property prices and municipal housing. Landlords particularly resented both the clauses in the 1890 Housing Act which forced them to maintain and repair properties to an acceptable standard and the 1915 Rent Restrictions Act, which was still in operation. Landlords stated that the 1915 Act prevented them from charging a rent which would allow them to maintain and repair properties. Letters to the local papers frequently stated that tenants, and in particular working class tenants, should expect to pay far more rent if they wanted to see repairs and improvements carried out.[175] The suggestion was often made that the improvements demanded were excessive and the repairs minor, but costly when extended across a landlord’s entire portfolio of property.

[175] *Western Daily Press*, ‘Letters to the Editor: The Housing Question’, 3 February 1919; ‘Letters to the Editor: Standard Rent’, 13 October 1920; *Western Morning News*, ‘Correspondence: Housing Problems’, 27 October 1921.

However, the reports of the local housing inspectors demonstrated the poor condition of many houses. One report submitted to Plymouth's Housing of the Working Classes Committee in February 1921 detailed 22 inspections and 596 re-inspections of property. The defects most frequently recorded included leaking and broken roofs, broken windows, windows which would not open (leading to damp and rotten walls due to lack of ventilation), rotten floors, fallen ceilings and defective hearths. The majority of dwellings shared toilet and wash-house facilities, and virtually all of these were defective, with missing doors, broken roofs and broken plumbing.[176] A hearing held in Bristol in 1926 regarding the closure orders for unfit houses revealed similar defects. One owner claimed that repairs had been undertaken and the houses rendered fit for habitation, but the Medical Officer stated that no essential repairs had been carried out and to render the houses fit would require almost complete reconstruction.[177] Reports such as these suggest that even basic maintenance of many properties was neglected for long periods of time. The reports therefore make it clear why councils were prepared to withstand the pressure and complaints heaped on municipal building by property owners.

The cost of building municipal houses attracted equal vitriol, particularly as the houses were seen as extravagant in terms of design and space. Some owner-occupiers expressed resentment at such housing, stating that people should be prepared to 'pay a fair price' for their houses rather than having them provided by the local authority.[178] It is evident that such individuals felt that municipal housing was

[176] TNA, HLG 47/492 Plymouth C.B. Representations as to Part I &II Schemes: Unhealthy areas, 'Report of Inspections into Housing Conditions, 19 February 1921'.
[177] BRO, M/BCC/HOU/1/1 Bristol City Council Housing Committee Minute Book No.4 1925-26, 11 January 1926.
[178] *Western Daily Press*, Letters to the Editor 'The Housing Question', 20 February 1919, 2 February 1919, 'Standard Rent', 13 October 1920.

aimed firmly at the working classes rather than the middle classes or ex-servicemen, as the rhetoric was very much that the undeserving were being handed 'something for nothing'. This is part of a wider expression of dismay at the rising prices of the early 1920s and the perceived cause of the rises – the 'greed' of the working man in demanding higher wages.[179] Despite such pressures, and the rising costs of building, the three cities still pushed ahead with and expanded their building programmes, demonstrating their commitment to an issue they considered extremely important.

The economic provisions of the 1919 Act put huge strain on government finances as the cost of building rose and extended those costs far beyond the limit of the penny rate. This led to a 1923 amendment act which changed the financial provisions for housing schemes to a flat subsidy for each house instead of meeting costs over the penny rate. The 1923 amendment also extended the subsidy to private developers in order to stimulate the housing market further. The subsidies were further amended by the Housing Act 1924, which slightly increased the money per house available. The majority of houses built in the three cities during the 1920s were built under the 1924 subsidy, due to the improved availability of materials and labour after 1925.

There was a further Housing Act in 1925, which provided subsidies for 'reconditioning' existing housing stock, and a basic framework for tackling the unhealthy areas in the centre of cities.[180] This Act reflected the awareness in central government that a further tool was needed to alleviate housing conditions beyond just building new houses. The slum problem still remained as the desired 'filtering up' effect had not materialised, partly due to the 1915 Rent Restrictions act.

[179] *Western Morning News*, Correspondence 'Road to Ruin', 'Rate Resisting League', 31 January 1921.
[180] Gordon Cherry, *Town Planning in Britain Since 1900: The rise and fall of the planning ideal* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.74-75

The Act had been extended in 1919 and 1920 to give further protections to tenants and had brought virtually all private rented property under its jurisdiction. The Act restricted rent rises, but only while existing tenants remained in occupation. Once the tenancy changed hands, the landlord was free to set a new rent level.[181] With people moving to the newly built houses, there were more frequent changes of tenants, which in turn allowed landlords to reset rents at a higher level. As demand for accommodation was still high, there was no incentive or market force to keep rents low, which resulted in those who were supposed to 'filter up' out of the slums being priced out of the market in both private and municipal accommodation.

The need to deal with the slums had been acknowledged by central government prior to the 1919 Act and had been underlined by the report of the Unhealthy Areas Committee in 1921.[182] However, this report also recognised that the cost of replacing the slums was beyond the current means of both national and local government, and was not a desirable prospect for private developers. Instead a programme of amelioration was recommended in the short term, with slum clearance being the eventual aim.[183] Interestingly, the report also noted that time was needed for public opinion to recognised and embrace both the need for slum clearance and town planning, with the suggestion that the education of the public should be a priority; this opinion was also expressed in relation to post-war reconstruction.[184]

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[181] Sarah Heath, *The Historical Context of Rent Control in the Private Rented Sector* (Commons Library Standard Note SN/SP/6747, October 2013), pp.2-3: accessed January 2015 via Parliament.uk - http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN06747/the-historical-context-of-rent-control-in-the-private-rented-sector

[182] TNA, HLG 47/700, Unhealthy Areas Committee 1921, *Report of the Unhealthy Areas Committee (summery),* 13 May 1921.

[183] TNA, HLG 47/700, Unhealthy Areas Committee 1921, *Report of the Unhealthy Areas Committee (summery),* 13 May 1921, pp.1-4.

[184] Ibid, p.10.

The 1925 Act was designed to tackle the problem of slums and 'unhealthy areas' by reconditioning the houses at the bottom of rental market. There were also basic guidelines for clearing and rebuilding slum areas, but the guidelines and subsidies for doing this were, and are, unclear. Bristol City Council certainly considered using these powers in 1926-27, comparing the cost of clearing and replacing the dwellings in slum areas to providing new suburban housing without clearing the slums.[185] The Council did use the Act for improvement schemes in 1929 and it also appears to be the act used by Exeter City Council for improvement schemes for city centre areas in 1925-27.[186] The 1930 Housing Act introduced a proper framework for slum clearances, partly prompted by the building work already undertaken by local authorities and private developers throughout the 1920s. The increasing numbers of new suburban houses had reduced the general shortage of houses but the problems of the slums still remained. The 1930 Act redirected local authority building to slum clearance work.

The 1930 Housing Act heralded a second wave of local authority building, as the subsidies available for slum clearance work allowed councils to begin tackling the heart of their housing problems. The 1930 Act not only gave the framework for slum clearances, but gave local authorities more flexibility over rents to allow for the accommodation of all income levels. The city councils could now grant rent relief, a little like the modern housing benefit, which assessed the family's income and ability

[185] BRO, M/BCC/HOU/1/2, Bristol City Council, Housing Committee Minute Book No.6 'Memorandum Upon the Preparation of a Comprehensive Housing Scheme', 16 November 1927, pp. 4-7.
[186] BRO, M/BCC/HOU/1/3 Bristol City Council, Housing Committee Minute Book No.6, Committee Report, 'Housing Act 1925, City and County of Bristol (Dings area) Improvement Scheme 1929', 16 September 1929 pp.16-17; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee & No.4 Area Improvement Committee, 10 March 1925; Housing Committee, 31 March, 21 April 1925; No.4 Area Improvement Committee, 15 December 1925; City and County of the City of Exeter, *Housing,* pp.15, 22.

to pay rent and set a rent level accordingly. Exeter City Council set a minimum rate of one shilling per week, which allowed them to make rent agreements with the 'really necessitous cases' and ensure all those in need could afford the rent for a municipal house.[187] Bristol and Plymouth followed similar models, allowing them to also house the poorest.[188] Under the 1930 Act, Bristol further expanded its new estates at Fishponds, Knowle, Filton and Shirehampton and Plymouth added to the North Prospect estate.[189] Exeter bought further land adjoining its Burnthouse Lane estate and earmarked land at Whipton and Stoke Hill for further housing schemes.[190]

The Practice of Building in the South Western Cities 1918-1939

The houses built in all three cities between the wars reflect the influence of the Garden City movement and the shift in aesthetic taste toward simpler and starker building design. The early estates built in all three cities use the type of vernacular-inspired design made popular by the Arts and Crafts movement. This is particularly evident in the houses at Fishponds and Knowle in Bristol, which employ a variety of designs and architectural features and use green spaces to great effect, with houses frequently grouped around a central green to evoke the village green. This is remarkably effective to the modern eye, as the planting used on the estates has now reached maturity and reinforces the idea of the village in the city. The layout of the streets is a nod to another major influence on the building of the era: the Georgian town. Georgian architecture enjoyed a revival during the first half of the Twentieth

[187] City and County of the City of Exeter, *Housing,* 1937, p. 20.
[188] BRO, M/BCC/HOU/1/5; Housing Committee Minute Book No.6 1932-1933, 18 April 1932.
[189] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Housing Schemes', 5 December 1930
[190] DHC, City Engineers and Surveyors Papers, Box 52 - Stoke Hill Allotments: Compulsory Purchase Order for acquisition of land etc 1937; 5582 City Architects Papers, Box 9 – Temporary Houses Hill Barton: File- Vaughan Road (West) Temporary Houses 27 October 1944-November 1947, Memo from Town Clerk to City Architect re land at Whipton, 30 October 1944.

Century, having previously been dismissed by the Victorians as too dull and regular in layout and design.[191] The elements of Georgian building which made it so appealing - the clean lines, lack of decoration and emphasis on materials - were the principles central to the Arts and Crafts and the Modern movements. The influence of these and other related architectural styles, such as Art Deco, can be seen not just in housing but in public buildings throughout both the interwar and post-war periods. Bristol's interwar estates with their Georgian and vernacular-Arts-and-Crafts influences are a strong reflection of these two principle architectural influences and similar expressions can be found in the estates at Exeter and Plymouth.

Exeter's early estates were vernacular in flavour, but the Buddle Lane and later Burnthouse Lane estates are distinctly Neo-Georgian in both building style and layout. The earliest parts of Plymouth's estates reflect the Arts and Crafts influence, with vernacular-type buildings and the use of country-lane layouts and planting. As the Plymouth estates developed, there was a noticeable change of style to a distinctly Neo-Georgian type of architecture in the 1930s, although the country-lane layouts remain.

The private speculative building of the era also took its cue from the vernacular and Arts and Crafts styles, but tended to add more detailing and decoration. The use of Tudor-inspired details in speculative housing led to the monikers 'Tudorbethan' and 'Stockbroker Tudor'.[192] These houses, common to virtually every town and city in Britain, were strangely and spectacularly reviled by planners, architects and social commentators. Their views were summed up by the architect Bertram Clough Williams-Ellis, who described them as 'mean and perky little houses that surely

[191] Briggs, *Victorian Cities,* p. 44.
[192] Bowdler, 'Between the Wars' in *London Suburbs,* p.117.

none...should inhabit with satisfaction'.[193] It is possible that local authorities therefore chose the starker Arts and Craft and Neo-Georgian styles as a demonstration of 'good' design in an attempt to educate the 'average' person in such architectural styles.

The use of plain building styles could also be interpreted as an expression of thrift and economy. Municipal houses were being built with public money and in an age of economic hardship and 'anti-waste' campaigns it was important for local authorities to demonstrate that this money was being spent wisely. Thus the undecorated and solid municipal houses were a physical interpretation of this atmosphere of austerity and could attract little criticism of extravagant spending. This argument was certainly being used in 1930 to defend the style of Bristol's municipal houses and concerns expressed more generally about the cost of municipal housing would support this view.[194] The style of the houses appears to have attracted little contemporary criticism but the use of land and the provision of amenities on estates did provoke more dissent.

The lack of amenities, such as shops, on inter-war estates was a frequent criticism throughout the era and informed the way post-war estates were designed. It is sometimes unclear whether the concept of the huge inter-war estate filled with endless semi-detached houses sprang from the municipal or private building of the era. Estates began to be styled as soulless places with no sense of character, culture or sociability attached to them. The preference for semi-detached houses started to

[193] Clough Williams-Ellis, as quoted in Paul Oliver, Ian Davis and Ian Bentley *Dunroamin: The suburban semi and its enemies* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1981), pp.34-35.
[194] *Western Daily Press*, 'To Brighten long lines of Bristol houses', 9 July 1930; *Western Daily Press*, Letters to the Editor, 'New houses', 24th July 1920.

be reviled as the root of a selfish culture as they allowed people to shut themselves away and not engage with society.[195] However, owners and tenants alike valued the privacy that the new estate layouts provided.

The concept of the inter-war estate as a wasteland built without regard for amenity is misleading, as the original plans for many of these estates demonstrate that these facilities had been planned in from the start. The plans for Bristol's Sea Mills estate at Avonmouth shows areas set aside for shopping parades, churches, parks as well as leisure buildings such as cinemas and restaurants.[196] Exeter's Buddle Lane and Burnthouse Lane estates had areas for shops, pubs, health centres and churches designated from the start.[197] Sadly the plans for Plymouth's estates do not appear to have survived, but the design of the estates suggests that this city too had planned in amenities from the start. All of the three cities put particular emphasis on open space and the estates were all well supplied with parks and playing fields.

However, it took time for these amenities to materialise and it was this delay that led to the criticisms of the estates. The subsidies provided by the government for housing schemes only covered the houses themselves, which meant that additional funding had to be found to build other facilities. Although there was evidently some funding available to aid this, particularly for schools, the lack of a distinct subsidy to allow for amenities to be built led to delays in building.[198] The same situation appeared post-war, with applications for shops and leisure buildings on the post-war

[195] Ian Davis, 'One of the Greatest Evils: Dunroamin and the Modern movement' in *Dunroamin*, p.48; Thomas Sharp, *English Panorama* (London: Architectural Press, 1950), p.95.
[196] TNA, HLG 4/404A (Maps & Plans), Bristol CB; Avonmouth No.9 Second Development Plan.
[197] City and County of the City of Exeter, *Housing*, folded map of Burthouse Lane Estate, pp.10-11.
[198] BRO, M/BCC/HOU/1/1, Housing Committee Minute Book No.4 1925-26, 4 May, 27 August 1925, 10 March, 18 October, 6 December 1926, 31 January, 7 February 1927.

estates all refused initially on grounds of economy, despite the inconvenience this created for the new tenants.

There is also some evidence of opposition from private developers to amenities being built. Bristol City Council received at least one objection to a proposed shopping area at the Filton estate on the grounds that 'the land was not suitable for the development of shops' owing to its development as a 'high class residential estate' prior to the area being put under a planning scheme. The land-developer, Mr Moore, believed that the provision of shops would damage the value of the new private houses and 'check development of this valuable and rapidly expanding section of the Estate', thus damaging his investment.[199]

Expressions of anxiety over the loss of site values due to planning schemes appear frequently in the records of all three cities, and this particular objection in Bristol may shed some light on the lack of amenities on private estates as well as the difficulties with municipal estates.[200] The private estates of the era are often entirely lacking in any kind of amenity, but Moore's concerns suggest that the lack of provision may have been due to builders responding to buyer demands and opinions. Private building was generally aimed at the middle classes, and it is fairly likely that this group would have seen it a sign of status that the corner shop was not required on their estate. This would have indicated that the residents were well-off enough to have an account with their tradesmen and have all their goods delivered, rather than having to shop on a daily basis. It was not unusual for municipal and private estates

[199] TNA, HLG 4/404B, Bristol C.B Town Planning Preliminary Statement - Letter from Phoenix Chambers, on behalf of Mr Moore, to Edmund J Taylor, Bristol Town Clerk re development of shops at Filton, 29 September 1925.
[200] TNA, HLG 4/404B Bristol C.B Town Planning Preliminary Statement, 'Bristol Town Planning Scheme No.1 and Filton Preliminary Statement; The Objections', 1925; TNA, HLG 4/1744 Plymouth C.B Planning Scheme No.1, Letter from Ministry of Health to Messrs. D. Ward & Sons, re Ring Road route, 31 March 1938 – other letters in same bundle in similar vein.

to be side by side, adding to the concerns about reduced value for the private developments.[201] In this situation, it is easy to see that the presence of amenities on the municipal estate could have been seen as 'lowering the tone', and therefore property values, of neighbouring private estates.

The town planning provisions of the 1919 Act were minimal compared to the elements dealing with housing. The Act allowed local authorities to 'zone' land for particular uses, such as housing, industry and business, but did not allow for precise control. In practice this meant that once land was designated for a particular use, local authorities had no control over what was actually built as long as it didn't contradict the zoning.[202] The Act was only applicable to land which had not yet been developed, but was likely to be in the near future, which meant that no provision was made for tackling blight in central areas.[203] The Act also contained clauses for the compensation of land-owners that proved particularly onerous for local authorities. Land-owners were entitled to claim compensation if they were adversely affected by a planning scheme, and could claim compensation at the maximum possible value of the land. This was defined as what the land would be worth if it was developed in the most profitable way, regardless of whether the land was likely ever to be developed in such a way.[204] The prospect of being liable for such compensation did discourage some local authorities from developing planning schemes. There was also a lengthy consultation process for any proposed scheme, which was designed to allow anyone affected by a scheme to object at any stage. In theory it promoted an open and co-

[201] Ian Bentley, 'Individualism or Community?: Private enterprise housing and the council estate' in *Dunroamin*, pp.120-121
[202] Cullingworth & Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK*, p.15-16.
[203] Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, p.200; Barry Cullingworth, *Town and Country Planning in England and Wales* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968), p.18.
[204] Ibid. p.21.

operative system, but in reality local authorities could become mired in objections and inquiries which could add many years to developing a scheme.[205]

As housing was the most pressing issue, the early planning schemes created by the three cities were for new areas of housing with some minimal zoning for other activities, such as industry. Initially town planning was parcelled into the responsibilities of the housing committees but this was gradually changed, with Bristol leading the way. In 1923 Bristol City Council created an entirely separate Town Planning Committee, which took on the wider responsibilities of overseeing development other than housing in the city. The Committee worked on the Joint Town Planning Committee scheme for the wider Bristol area with nine other local councils, as well as overseeing Bristol's schemes. The Joint Town Planning Scheme was produced in 1930, under the guidance of Patrick Abercrombie, and outlined the development of the whole Bristol area in terms of housing, industry and transport.[206]

Exeter also created a Town Planning Committee in 1923 and outlined its intentions in December 1923, designating areas for open space, new roads and industrial use.[207] A full scheme was created by 1924 under the guidance of the City Engineer and Surveyor, Thomas Moulding, and was followed by two further schemes in 1928 and 1929. The latter two schemes are particularly interesting as they demonstrate an innovative use of the available planning legislation. The 1928 scheme did not provide a plan for new building, but sought to protect the existing fabric of the central part of the city. The scheme put the historic heart of the city under a scheme akin to the modern conservation zone, preventing any further

[205] Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, pp.190, 200.
[206] Abercrombie, Patrick, *Bristol and Bath Regional Planning Scheme* (Liverpool: Hodder & Stoughton/Liverpool University Press, 1930)
[207] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes, Town Planning Committee, 11 December 1923.

development or alteration of buildings without the permission of the City Council 'on account of the special architectural, historic and artistic interest attached to the area'.[208]

The 1929 scheme used the legislation in a similar way, but this time it was applied to a piece of open land which 'was not included in the previous Town Planning Schemes as until lately almost the whole area was...in the ownership of a body of Charity Trustees' who had not shown any intention of developing the land. However, the new owners 'have intimated their intention to erect dwelling houses and an industrial building therein'.[209] The parcel of land was just outside the former city walls and formed a large open space in the centre of the city, which the council were evidently anxious not to see built upon. The two schemes were approved and demonstrate that the legislation was not as restrictive as is sometimes painted.

The early planning legislation, until the Town Planning Act of 1932, applied to undeveloped land only, which in theory meant that local authorities had no control over existing built up areas. This is often cited in the existing planning literature, but Exeter's use of this legislation to apply planning permission to an existing built up area and a piece of open ground within that area suggests that local authorities found ways around the restrictions.[210] The application of a planning scheme to the central areas of the city also demonstrates that the City Council was highly aware of the architectural value of many of the buildings within the centre. The character and aesthetic nature of the city centre was well understood as a tourist attraction even inter-war and by applying such a scheme the City Council could protect this asset

[208] TNA, HLG 4/927, Exeter T.C, *Resolution Deciding to Prepare a Town Planning Scheme,* 1927.
[209] TNA, HLG 4/957, Exeter Town Planning Scheme No.3, *Resolution Deciding to Prepare a Town Planning Scheme,* 1928.
[210] Cullingworth & Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK*, pp. 15-16.

from unsuitable and reckless development. This also debunks the idea that local authorities had no interest in preserving and protecting historic buildings.[211]

The planning schemes of the 1920s frequently outlined plans for new roads, particularly ring-roads and bypasses to carry through traffic around city centres. The increase in motor traffic had led to serious congestion in all three South Western cities, particularly as the main trunk roads tended to come right through the city centre.[212] Exeter had a particular problem in this respect as the two major routes through the South West, the A30 and the A38, both came through the city's High Street. By-passes to carry the traffic around the edge of the city were proposed to alleviate this problem and construction began in the late 1920s. Bristol and Plymouth both planned ring-roads around the cities to help with similar problems.[213] Plymouth's ring-road failed to materialise, but Bristol started by building Temple Way just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.[214] Road widening projects were also written into the plans and often provided unemployment relief schemes as they did not require skilled labour.[215]

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[211] Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961: Devising and defending a Modernist agenda' in Peter Larkham and Mark Clapson (eds.), *The Blitz and it's Legacy* (London: Routledge 2013), pp.156; David Adams & Peter Larkham, 'Bold Planning, Mixed Experiences: The diverse fortunes of post-war Birmingham' in *The Blitz and it's Legacy,* pp.137-150.

[212] Patrick Abercrombie and James Paton Watson, *A Plan for Plymouth* (Plymouth: Underhill, 1943), pp.49-52; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre*, p.19; Thomas Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix: A plan for rebuilding* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), pp.65-66.

[213] BRO, M/BCC/TPL/1/1 Bristol City Council Planning Committee Minutes 1923-1925, 3 February 1925.

[214] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth of the Future', 13 March 1937; 'Plymouth 'RingRoad' Plan' 7 December 1938.

[215] DHC, 6142, Exeter and District Town Planning Scheme (Town and Country Planning Act 1932) 1936; PWDRO, 3133, Plymouth City Council, The City of Plymouth Planning Scheme No.1, 1937; TNA, HLG 4/404A Bristol C.B Correspondence File, Minute Sheet *Town Planning Bristol C.B Unemployment Grants Committee C.758 (903/8190),* 11 November 1924

Town planning legislation was revised by the Town Planning Act 1932 and gave local authorities the power to apply schemes to existing built-up areas as well as undeveloped land. The Act was originally intended to complement the Housing Act 1930 and should have been passed in the same year. However, the collapse of the Labour government in August 1931 led to the Act being shelved.[216] The bill introduced in 1930 had deliberately made minimal financial provisions for the new act, leaving out elements such as betterment charges, as the Labour government was also tabling legislation for land taxes, which would deal with this element of planning. It was reintroduced in almost the same format in early 1932 by the succeeding Minister, Edward Hilton-Young, for the National Government and came into force in the same year. The issue of land ownership was still a sensitive one and any act which appeared to be restricting property rights was still likely to be unpopular. The relaunched bill of 1932 therefore deliberately left the financial clauses in their weak state to reassure property and land owners that nationalisation and confiscation were not part of the National Government's policy. It has been suggested that this decision made it difficult for local authorities to discover the full range of planning tools available to them, which impacted on the type of plans submitted to the Ministry.[217]

The extension of planning powers to existing developed areas allowed Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth to tackle problems such as traffic congestion and slum areas in a comprehensive fashion for the first time. Although the previous town planning legislation had allowed for development zoning, the provisions for dealing with existing nuisances, particularly in terms of roads, had been minimal. The ability to

[216] John Sheail, 'Interwar Planning in Britain: The wider context', *Journal of Urban History,* 11/3 (1985), pp.345-346
[217] Ibid, p.346

now plan in a joined-up fashion was evidently appreciated, as Exeter's supporting statement for its Scheme No.4 demonstrates. Scheme No.4 was submitted in 1934 and explicitly states that the greatest advantage to the city would be gained from dealing with road plans and general development under this one scheme, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Exeter's statement also stressed that bringing all areas of the city, both developed and undeveloped, under the Scheme would make planning restrictions uniform across the city. The previous legislation had led to a situation which was felt to be inequitable as it acted 'unfairly on those persons developing in a planned area' compared to those outside the boundaries of existing schemes.[218] This reflects one of the reasons Bristol chose to work with neighbouring authorities to create the 1930 Joint Town Planning Scheme, where problems of a similar nature were also envisaged with only some areas being under a planning scheme.[219] The benefits of uniform planning regulations were therefore already recognised by local authorities as a way of avoiding disputes and unsuitable development. The calls for more comprehensive legislation in the 1940s, which ironed out the problems with the financial and property clauses in the interwar legislation, have their roots within these experiences of planning.

The 1932 Act obviously did give local authorities wide-ranging powers, as Plymouth's Scheme No.1 of 1937 demonstrates. The scheme covered all aspects of building and planning, from the widths of streets to the height of new buildings and the siting of different types of industry. It is also notable that Scheme No.1 also gave the City Council the power to enforce the maintenance of private open spaces and gardens, if they were deemed a nuisance, and to prevent the extension or replacement of

[218] TNA, HLG 4/960, Exeter C.B Scheme No.4, *Exeter Town Planning Scheme No.4 supporting statement* 1934, p.2.
[219] BRO, InfoBox35/48, Shilliter, *Housing Reform,* p.11.

existing buildings.[220] The latter clause was similar in nature to Exeter's Scheme No.2 which restricted development in the city centre, as it was evidently intended to protect buildings of architectural or historical merit. As Plymouth City Council had come under fire in previous years for including a number of significant buildings in the Barbican area in clearance schemes, this clause also demonstrates the changing view of historical buildings in the city. There were several instances of buildings dating from the sixteenth century being scheduled for demolition, by private owners as well as part of wider clearance schemes, which attracted much attention.[221] This appears to have led to a more measured approach to older buildings in Plymouth, with more consideration being given to their architectural value rather than just their value as dwellings or business premises. The same phenomenon can be found in Exeter, with a number of similar-aged buildings in the West Gate area of the city becoming the centre of a comparable campaign to preserve and renovate rather than demolish them.[222]

Bristol and Exeter also submitted schemes for new civic centres under the 1932 Act, which would have drawn together a number of civic buildings into one part of the city centre. This type of civic centre became fashionable at the end of the nineteenth century and retained its popularity until post-1945. Bristol began work on a new Council House in 1938 and planned the surrounding area as a civic centre, combining facilities such as the nearby university and museum buildings as part of

[220] PWDRO, 3133, Plymouth City Council, The City of Plymouth Planning Scheme No.1, 1937, pp.27-29.
[221] TNA, HLG 47/492, Plymouth C.B Representations as to Part I & II Schemes: Unhealthy Areas, Letter from Sir Phillip Pilditch, MP, to Raymond Unwin, Minister of Health, re Barbican area, 16 November 1926; TNA, HLG 47/492, Plymouth C.B Representations as to Part I & II Schemes: Unhealthy Areas, Report by Sir Phillip Pilditch 'Elizabethan Plymouth – Drakes and the Spanish Armada and the Pilgrim Fathers and the Mayflowers Plymouth 'Sanitate but Save''.
[222] Todd Gray, *Exeter in the 1940's: War, destruction and rebirth* (Exeter: Mint Press, 2004), p.125. *Western Morning News*, 'Restoration of Old Exeter', 24 November 1921.

the scheme.[223] Exeter partially revived the Thomas Mawson plan of 1913, proposing a new civic centre on the site of the existing Higher Market and area behind the Guildhall in 1934.[224] This area was deemed as 'outworn' and had not been included in the 1928 planning scheme which prevented further development in the city centre.[225]

The debates over the site for the new civic hall further emphasis the arguments regarding attitudes towards existing buildings and their conservation during the inter-war and post-war periods. The Higher Market opened in 1838 and had been partially designed by John Fowler, who also designed Covent Garden. The Market facade is currently Grade-II listed and is an excellent example of late-Neo Classical design in the city, built in Bath stone and fronted with Doric columns. However, nineteenth-century buildings were frequently undervalued in the interwar era, and opinions on the Higher Market's value were varied, with some suggesting that it should be 'burnt down and shops placed there'.[226] This view was very much as the extreme end, with others speaking in support of retaining the Market as it was deemed a 'fine asset to the city'.[227] It seems that the motion to retain the building and find a different site for the proposed hall was, however, defeated and the plan for the hall approved.

The recognition of the building's value from an aesthetic perspective and as an attraction for the city does underline the changing attitude towards older buildings and conservation, as the matter was considered worthy of debate. The discussions

[223] Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre*, p.19.
[224] *Exeter Gazette,* 'City and New Central Hall', 19 October 1934; *Western Times*, 'Exeter's New Civic Hall: Opposing views on Queen Street site', 26 October 1934; DHC, Exeter City Council: Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 3 February 1943.
[225] TNA, HLG 5/875, Exeter Town Planning Schemes 1 & 2 Maps (Ordnance Survey 25" County Series).
[226] *Western Times*, 'Exeter's New Civic Hall: Opposing views on Queen Street site', 26 October 1934.
[227] *Western Times*, 'Exeter's New Civic Hall: Opposing views on Queen Street site', 26 October 1934.

over the fate of the Higher Market are also revealing in terms of consultation with the public over planning and development. It is suggested by one councillor, a Mr Crosse, that the matter should have been put to a 'postcard vote' at an early stage. This suggests a poll of citizen opinion on the matter, which was not unprecedented in the South West at this time. Four years earlier, Bristol City Council had held a city-wide poll on the proposed new arterial roads in the city and plans for new civic buildings around College Green. The latter appears to be the early form of the planning schemes later submitted under the 1932 Act for a new civic centre. The poll was held on 7 February 1930 and all citizens on the electoral role were entitled to vote on the plans.[228] Disappointingly for the Council, the poll was greeted with apathy on the part of citizens and the turnout was low.[229] Those who did vote polled against the College Green scheme, but in favour of the road scheme, leaving the civic centre idea to be revived at a later and more economically favourable date.

It is frequently stated in literature on both inter-war and post-war building that planners and local authorities did not seek the views of citizens and actively ignored any views expressed.[230] It is not clear whether Bristol City Council had used a city-wide poll before to gauge the opinion of citizens, or if the method was used again after the disappointing turn-out, but it demonstrates that local authorities did attempt to engage with citizens over schemes. The suggestion that Exeter also considered such methods, although they do not appear to have used them, indicates that this

[228] *Western Daily Press*, 'Council Decide on Poll of City', 25 January 1930.
[229] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol Electors Do Not Rush The Polls!: Apathy in voting on city schemes', 8 February 1930.
[230] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 47-49; Peter Larkham, 'Remaking Cities: Images, control and post-war replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24/5 (1997), pp.741-760; David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives*, 26/2 (2011), pp.237-260.

may have been a more common occurrence than previously thought. It is also frequently suggested that citizens had little opportunity to register objections or grievances over planning schemes, but the records of all three South Western cities reveal that objections and complaints were frequently lodged over schemes.[231] Evidently public inquiries into schemes could also be triggered via the objection process, as reports on inquiries do appear in the local press and in local authority records.[232] It is more debatable how successful objectors were in having their complaints upheld, but this may reflect the financial nature of many of the complaints. Objections relating to compensation and other financial clauses within the legislation were beyond the jurisdiction of local authorities, as these aspects were controlled by central government.

Conclusions

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the three cities all had plans in place for civic redevelopment, new roads and further housing schemes. The cities had already accomplished significant progress in housing since 1918; Exeter had built over 2,000 new dwellings, Bristol over 13,000 and Plymouth over 5,000.[233] Programmes of slum clearance and rehousing were well underway and it was hoped that the worst types of dwelling would be eradicated in the near future. Progress had also been made in the provision of open spaces, roads and facilities such as new schools and health

[231] TNA, HLG 4/404B, Bristol C.B Town Planning Preliminary Statement, *Bristol Town Planning Scheme No.1 & Filton List of Objectors*, 1926.
[232] *Western Daily Press*, 'Plan to Demolish 112 More Houses in Bristol: Owners objections heard at inquiry', 7 October 1936; TNA HLG 4/404B Bristol C.B Town Planning Preliminary Statement, 'Bristol Town Planning Scheme Preliminary Statement 22 March 1926'; 'Town Planning Act 1925, City and County of Bristol Planning Scheme Preliminary Statement 23 March 1926'; TNA, HLG4/927 Exeter T.C, 'City of Exeter Town Planning Scheme Public Enquiry 22 June 1927'.
[233] City and County of the City of Exeter, *Housing*, p.19; Gill, *Plymouth; A new history*, p.175; Lyes, *Bristol 1934-1939*, p.23.

centres. The building projects had gone ahead despite objections from private property owners, which were still being heard in the late 1930s, with councillors of all political persuasions holding firm in their missions to alleviate housing conditions.[234]

The political landscape had not altered drastically during this time; all three cities still had Conservative-led councils in 1939. However, there had been a change in the second party for each city, with the Labour Party steadily gaining seats throughout the period, generally at the expense of the Liberal Party. Exeter's political landscape altered the least, with support in municipal elections still centred on the Conservative Party and other conservative elements, such as the Ratepayers Party. Great loyalty was show to some Labour councillors, such as Alfred Browning who was returned consistently between 1921 and 1936 for the St Johns ward, but Labour support was sporadic and patchy across the city as a whole. The city retained the greatest level of support for the Liberal party out of the three cities, again with great loyalty being show to some Liberal councillors.[235] Plymouth's Conservatives also saw consistent support across the city, but Labour made greater gains than in Exeter. Of the city's twenty wards, thirteen returned a Labour councillor at least once, with the wards of Molesworth, Sutton and St Peters becoming strongly Labour during the period. The Liberals retained loyal support in some wards, such as Laira and St Aubyn, but were generally a waning influence. Unlike Exeter, the Ratepayers Association did not become a political force.[236]

Bristol saw the greatest change, with Labour heavily supported in twelve of the city's twenty-eight wards by 1939. However, the spread of Labour's political power across the city was aided by the creation of five new wards in 1936. These wards were created to provide better representation for the newly built areas of the city,

[234] *Western Daily Press*, 'Bristol Council Should Sell Their Houses', 18 November 1938.
[235] See Appendix B, *Exeter Council Members.*
[236] See Appendix C, *Plymouth Council Members.*

most of which were the new Council estates. Unsurprisingly, these areas tended to demonstrate strong Labour support. Labour support did not mushroom suddenly in Bristol, there was steady growth from the early 1920s onwards and those wards which were showing strong support in 1939 were generally demonstrating the same affiliation in 1929. As referred to at the beginning of the chapter, the Liberal and Conservative parties joined forces as the Citizen Party, so it is not possible to extrapolate the fortunes of the individual parties in the city. As in Plymouth, the Ratepayers Association did not become a political force.[237]

The result was that going into the Second World War the cities were represented by only marginally changed councils compared with 1918. The loyalty shown to some individuals meant that some councillors who served during the Second World War had been in local government since the 1920s. Many of them had sat on the committees for housing and planning and had overseen the new building projects as a result. These were often the same people who sat on the committees for housing and reconstruction during the war years and oversaw the initial stages of the rebuilding. For example, Bristol's Henry Hennessey was particularly prominent on the housing committees both pre and post-Second World War, as was Frederick Cottey in Exeter.[238] In Plymouth, Waldorf Astor played a prominent role in the city's affairs as Lord Mayor and used his position to press for new planning legislation during the Second World War.

The continuity of staffs extended beyond individual councillors. The posts of City Engineer, City Architect and Town Clerk, and their associated departments, were all instrumental to reconstruction and were all led by individuals who had been in-post

[237] See Appendix A, *Bristol Council Members.*
[238] See Appendix A – Bristol Council Members and Appendix B – Exeter Council Members; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee 1927-1950

prior to 1939.[239] Again these individuals had overseen the planning and housing schemes prepared under the legislation of the 1930s and therefore understood the needs of their respective cities, as well as the limitations of the existing legislation. It was these personnel who were responsible for reconstruction planning in all three cities and they undoubtedly drew on their interwar experiences to do this. They understood the problems facing each city as they had seen and lived them themselves. This contrasts sharply with the view presented in some of the current literature that 1945 saw a complete change of leadership and personnel within local authorities.

The interwar period paved the way for the reconstruction policies of the post-war era. The legislation produced throughout the interwar period laid the ground work for the comprehensive Town and Country Planning Act 1947 by demonstrating where the weaknesses in planning law lay, and the steps which would be required to alleviate them. The experiences of local authorities in building and planning interwar clearly demonstrated what worked and what needed further improvements in terms of the planning frameworks. Local authorities also gained experience in planning and constantly developed their ideas regarding municipal housing and the redevelopment of urban areas. Estate design in particular was shaped in this way as the housing of the interwar period became a working experiment in good design. The perceived failings of both municipal and private estates fed into improved urban design and the development of 'neighbourhood unit' planning, which treated each new development as a separate community in its own right. This latter idea became the standard way of building new housing areas post-war, with virtually all municipal and most private

[239] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes 1937, November; Exeter City Council Minutes 1938, November; PWDRO, 185/57, Plymouth City Council Minutes 1938/39, November; BRO, M/BCC/BC/1/56-57 Bristol City Council Minutes, 1937 –39 (lists of councillors and staff for forthcoming year).

developments following the principles of ‘neighbourhood unit’ design. This was born directly from the problems seen in interwar estates, such as a lack of amenities and a homogenous socio-economic mix. The examples of the estates built in Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth demonstrate that the local authorities in the South Western cities were certainly aware of these potential failings and did attempt to build amenities into their estates. There appears to have been a lack of central government support for some types of facility, such as retail units on estates, which hampered these attempts while finance was not always available to execute other schemes, such as health centres, to the desired standard.

The experience of municipal building also highlighted the condition of many working class dwellings and the need for improved housing. The dedication with which the three cities tackled this problem and the ways in which they attempted to use the existing legislation in order to alleviate slum conditions demonstrates the importance they attached to this problem. The more general acceptance of the need for action also demonstrates that the housing problem was recognized by the public. The main body of objections appears to have come from those with vested interests, such as land and property owners, rather than the wider public. This continued to be the case in the post-war period, with objections to reconstruction coming principally from those who stood to lose financially. The wide discussions of housing need, and to some extent the need for planning in general, in the press also appears to have opened up ideas around planning and housing to a wider audience. It is certainly evident from the correspondence with the papers during the Second World War with regard to reconstruction that many citizens had a well-developed grasp of planning and housing issues. The discussions seen in the local press regarding housing and

planning in the interwar period may well have provided the gateway to the subject for many people and helped embed the need for comprehensive planning in the public consciousness.

The concerns of the wealthier classes also demonstrate the uneasiness felt by this group as the broader concept of ‘planning’ in economic and industrial terms grew and gained acceptance. The Labour Party aims of state ownership of land and industry were a direct threat to this group’s status and lifestyle. The possibility of property and industry being taken into public ownership represented the loss of everything that many people in the middle-classes felt they had worked hard for and built up. At the same time, the dissolving of class boundaries through such economic concepts was a further threat to this group, potentially creating a distrust of ‘planning’ of all types. This manifested itself in the objections and concerns of property owners and traders in the post-war years, as town planning began to represent the fall of private enterprise and intrusion of Socialism.

On a practical level, the experience of building and managing large numbers of municipal houses equipped local authorities with the tools they needed to execute larger schemes in the wake of the Second World War. The three cities all gave consideration to non-traditional building methods as a way to overcome shortages of materials, labour and finance during the interwar period which would have undoubtedly helped them understand the systems available post-1945. The houses which were built interwar also informed the local authorities of the preferred designs amongst tenants and what worked well. It is notable that the parlour house became far more common as the period wore on owing to the acceptance by councillors that parlours were useful and well used, rather than an unnecessary luxury. The move to

houses with bathrooms, rather than the ‘bath in the scullery’ plan often found in the earliest houses, further demonstrates the shift in attitudes towards housing provision. Experience demonstrated that proper bathrooms were appreciated by tenants and were used appropriately. The idea of tenants misusing them and keeping coal in the bath was quickly dismissed and housing design amended accordingly. The houses built post-war all automatically had separate bathrooms and toilets as well as a parlour and kitchen, rather than a scullery and living room, based on the experiences of the interwar years.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the three South Western cities were in the process of implementing new civic plans to address their urban shortcomings. Housing in the three cities had been greatly improved by the building of both municipal and private estates, with plans being outlined to tackle the remaining slum areas in each city. The role of town planning in creating urban environments fit for the modern age had been firmly established, as was the need for municipal housing. The interwar years had seen a transformation in the way poverty and welfare were viewed, with the acknowledgement that the state had a role to play in alleviating the worst conditions. The emergence of mass and structural unemployment had demonstrated that poverty could have causes beyond the control of the individual, rather than being product of fecklessness or profligacy amongst the working classes. As such, the state had a responsibility to aid those in need. At the same time, the benefits of better-designed houses and towns for the health of the population had come to be recognised, along with the associated economic benefits these brought.

Chapter 2: Planning for a ‘Brave New Britain’ 1940-1946

The outbreak of war in 1939 put the redevelopment and slum clearance plans of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth on hold. The bomb damage sustained by the cities from late 1940 onwards changed the focus of planning to reconstruction, as large areas of each city required complete rebuilding. Planning as a discipline continued to evolve, with the experiences of the interwar years informing the design of houses and housing estates, and contributing to new ideas about urban layouts and planning. The reconstruction plans drawn up by the three cities would draw heavily on these new ideas in order to create cities for the future.

This chapter will critically re-examine the concepts of the ‘master planner’ and ‘top-down’ planning within reconstruction. The three cities took different approaches to planning, with Exeter and Plymouth employing consultant planners while Bristol chose an in-house approach. This will allow for the examination of the different approaches and outcomes in order to test the idea of the ‘master planner’. At the same time, the consultation processes undertaken in each city and the general dissemination of planning ideas can be examined in order to assess the involvement and understanding of citizens in reconstruction.

The state of planning at the outbreak of war

The developments in town planning at the end of the 1930s coalesced around housing and estate design. The suburban estate which came to characterise the housing of the interwar era, both in the private and municipal sectors, was considered to have a number of failings in terms of amenities and social cohesion.

All types of estate suffered from a lack of facilities and amenities which were thought to create a sense of isolation, as well as being inconvenient for residents. Municipal estates had ameliorated working class housing conditions, but the social ties and community spirit thought to characterise working class districts were considered to have been weakened by the new housing estates as social groups were broken up by the move to new areas; indeed this belief can be found in both contemporary town planning texts and more recent literature on municipal housing.[240] The new estates were thought to foster a more selfish and inward looking population, although research into housing ideals revealed that residents saw the greater privacy provided by the estate designs as a positive thing.[241] Private estates were considered to be just as insular and dulling in terms of community spirit, particularly as these rarely had any kind of amenities to make them communities rather than dormitory estates.[242]

The concept of 'neighbourhood planning' began to emerge at the end of the 1930s as a solution for these failings. The concept envisaged estates as self-contained communities built around amenities such as schools and shopping districts. In addition to these basic amenities, each of these 'neighbourhood units' would also have its own leisure facilities, such as pubs, cinemas, playgrounds and community centres. The optimal population for each unit would be between 5000 and 10,000 persons to ensure good access to amenities. Neighbourhood planning also advocated mixed class estates to avoid the perceived problems with

[240] Richard Sheppard, *Building for the People* (London: Allen & Unwin,1948), pp 106-108; Alice Coleman & Hilary Shipman, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and reality in planned housing* (London: Shipman 1985); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962).
[241] Reiss, *The Home I Want* (London: Batsford, 1919).
[242] Ian Davis, 'One of the Greatest Evils: Dunroamin and the Modern movement' in Paul Oliver, Ian Davis and Ian Bently, *Dunroamin: The Suburban semi and its enemies* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1981), p.48; Thomas Sharp, *English Panorama* (London: Architectural Press, 1950), p.95.

homogenous estates.[243] It was also intended that each unit should be within easy reach of places of work, with industrial planning complementing neighbourhood planning. The emphasis of neighbourhood planning, however, was to create better social cohesion and the sense of community which was thought to be lacking in modern life. The new ideas emerging in town planning and housing, such as neighbourhood planning, were intended to counter this problem and foster a greater sense of community and social responsibility. It was later hoped that the 'all in it together' spirit of the war could be retained and nurtured through these ideas.[244] These concepts underpinned the planning of the 1940s and can be seen in the estate design of all three South Western cities.

As these new planning concepts emerged, it was realised that planning had potential uses in sectors beyond housing and town redevelopment. Planning legislation could be revised to control industrial development and distribution as well. The 1930s had seen the collapse of the heavy industries, such as shipbuilding and steel, with devastating effects on the communities reliant on them. Meanwhile new light industries, such as the manufacturing of electrical goods and cars, had boomed. However, the new industries had not sited themselves in the depressed areas, instead clustering around the South East and the southern edge of the Midlands. Central government began to look at the potential for planning legislation to control the location of industry in order to prevent structural unemployment.[245] In 1937 the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, more commonly known as the Barlow Commission after its chairman Sir Montague Barlow, was

[243] Patrick Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1933); Thomas Sharp, *Town and Countryside* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).
[244] Gordon Cherry, *The Evolution of British Town Planning,* p.132.
[245] Gordon Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, pp. 109-113.

convened to consider the problems of the distribution of industry and the depressed areas, which had been highlighted in 1936 by the Third Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas. A better balance of industry would make local employment markets more resilient to economic changes as there would not be the reliance on one industry for all local employment and prosperity. The Barlow Commission was to consider how this might be achieved.

The findings of the Barlow Commission built upon the interwar reshaping of residential planning, with its aim of creating balanced communities with amenities and industry built into their infrastructure. The main recommendation of the Commission, laid out in its report of 1940, was that the location of industry should be directed by central government in order to achieve a more even distribution around the country.[246] This would help avoid the problems of structural unemployment and depressed areas which had been seen in the interwar period, as it would ensure that no area was solely reliant on one industry for the majority of local employment. The Barlow Commission demonstrated how planning was moving from a niche specialism, mostly concerned with housing, to a profession which could also aid economic prosperity. This is reflected in the plans of blitzed cities which presented plans for industrial and economic development as well as housing and the rebuilding of bombed areas.

[246] Lee S Green, 'Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, Report, cmd 6153', *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics,* 16/2, 1940, pp.248-247; *Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population Report: Presented to parliament by command of His Majesty January 1940* (London: HMSO, 1940).

Bomb damage and the need for reconstruction plans

Local authorities had been alive to the possibility of air attacks since the mid-1930s, when they had been instructed by government to produce air raid precaution plans.[247] The main concern had been gas attacks, but the potential destructive powers of high explosives and incendiary bombs were also acknowledged. As such, at the outbreak of war in 1939 air attacks were expected and from July 1940 all three South Western cities suffered repeated air raids. The South West in general suffered a surprisingly high number of air raids during the war, with the majority of larger towns suffering bomb damage. This was mostly due to 'tip and run' raids where the towns were unlucky rather than specific targets. Exeter suffered a number of such raids during 1940 and 1941, but later became a specific target in 1942 as part of the 'Baedeker' campaign directed at cities of historical or architectural importance. Plymouth and Bristol, however, had strategic importance and were specifically targeted as a result.

Bristol's commercial port and harbour made it a prime target and the city endured a sustained campaign of attacks between November1940 and April 1941. These resulted in serious and widespread damage across the city centre and some outlying residential districts, with a total of 89,080 buildings damaged or destroyed and over 3000 dwellings entirely destroyed.[248] The main shopping district, in the oldest part of the city, was severely damaged and a number of churches and buildings of architectural importance were destroyed.

[247] *Western Daily Press,* 'Precautions Against Air Raids', 12 July 1935; *Western Morning News,* 'In Event of Air Raids', 5 September 1935; 'Babies' peril in air raids', 1 December 1936.
[248] Edwin Webb & John Duncan, *Blitz over Britain* (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount, 1990), p. 90; See figs. 1 & 2 for maps of pre- and post-war city centre

Likewise, Plymouth's importance as a naval dockyard ensured its presence on the list of target cities. The city was an early casualty of the bombing campaigns, with the first raid occurring in July 1940, but didn't experience quite the same level of sustained attacks as Bristol. However, Plymouth instead suffered seven consecutive nights of bombing in April 1941 which obliterated much of the city centre. The city also lost over 3000 dwellings, with a further 18,389 seriously damaged.[249]

Exeter had no strategic importance and only suffered due to its reputation as an historic city. The worst raid was on the night of the 3/4 May 1942, which decimated the city centre and destroyed 1,500 dwellings.[250] Although the number of dwellings damaged or destroyed in Exeter was lower than in Plymouth or Bristol, the compact nature of the city meant that it represented a greater overall percentage of the city's housing stock.

Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth were left with severe housing shortages and crippled retail and business districts. The level of destruction required the rebuilding of city centres virtually from scratch, but also presented the opportunity of addressing the nuisances of the past. It was now possible to replan entirely new road systems and to make changes, such as the re-siting of industry, which had not been feasible prior to the war. At the same time, social changes were on the horizon, with the rhetoric around creating a 'brave new Britain' after the war raising questions about the provision of education, healthcare and employment for all.

[249] Crispin Gill, *Plymouth: A New History Vol.2; 1603 to the present day* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1979), p.197: See figs. 20, 21 & 23 for maps of pre- and post-war city centre and bomb damage.
[250] Norman Venning, *Exeter: The Blitz and Rebirth of the City; a pictorial history* (Exeter: Devon Books, 1988), p.91: See figs. 54, 55 & 56 for pre- and post-war city centre and bomb damage.

The cities were also left with serious financial difficulties as the damage and loss of properties resulted in a loss of rate income. Plymouth was particularly badly affected in this respect, losing 17% of its total rateable value, while Exeter lost 14.7% and Bristol 3%.[251] To put this in context, Coventry, widely regarded as one of the worst-damaged cities, lost 3.4% of its rateable value.[252] This pattern of bomb damage and financial loss was repeated across Britain, with a total of 19 cities eventually being designated as 'blitzed cities' to underscore the severity of the damage sustained. Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth were all included in this list, along with industrial centres such as Manchester and Birmingham.[253]

Business and property owners were anxious to rebuild as quickly as possible in order to maintain trade, as were local authorities as it would restore rateable value. As such, all three South Western cities applied to build temporary shops in the wake of bombing, but were refused permission by the Board of Trade.[254] The government's position was that all resources should be directed to the war effort, with building licences required for any work over the value of £100 from May 1941 to aid this.[255] Rebuilding during the war itself was also impractical as there was no guarantee that the air war was over, a stance underscored by the continued attacks on Bristol and Plymouth until 1944.[256]

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[251] Figures calculated by author from information found in Hasegawa's *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* p.28 and Exeter City Council income figures – DHC, Exeter City Council, 6530: Ratings and Valuations Books 1929-1990.
[252] Calculated from Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992), p.28.
[253] The full list of blitzed cities was as follows; Birkenhead, Birmingham, Bootle, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, Exeter, Hull, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Norwich, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Salford, Sheffield, Southampton, Swansea and Wallasey.
[254] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes, July 1942; *Western Morning News,* 'Great Shopping Centre', 16 July 1942.
[255] *Western Daily Press,* 'Temporary Shop Premises in Castle Street', 3 April 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'No Bungalow Shops', 24 April 1941.
[256] Gill, *Plymouth: A New History,* pp.196-197; For a full catalogue of raids on Bristol, see the University of the West of England resource on the Bristol Blitz http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/bhr/Main/ww2/1_13.htm (accessed 7/3/2017).

Building was therefore strictly controlled throughout the war and the rebuilding of war-damaged property, beyond 'first aid' repairs to make buildings habitable, was prohibited. These repairs were in themselves extremely important as they kept housing stock and businesses in use and helped to maintain morale. However, they could not tackle the scale of damage seen in the central areas of the many blitzed cities. Instead, blitzed cities were advised to begin planning so that rebuilding could begin immediately once the war was over. The consideration of and discussion about physical reconstruction was encouraged by both central government and various professional bodies, such as the Town and Country Planning Association. The creation of the Ministry of Works and Buildings under Lord Reith in 1940 helped to bolster such discussion, as it suggested that physical reconstruction was being taken seriously by the government.[257] Reith himself encouraged local authorities to begin planning for reconstruction, advising them to plan 'boldly and comprehensively' for the future, looking to the city of twenty or thirty years hence.[258]

The sustained bombing campaign into mid-1941 saw reconstruction become a popular topic of debate and discussion as it became evident that extensive rebuilding would be required in many towns and cities.[259] The discussion of a world after the war was to be encouraged, as it helped citizens to look ahead and imagine a new world created out of the ashes of the war. It gave a personal purpose to the sacrifice and hardship of the war itself, beyond the notions of international politics and intervention for the greater good. Reconstruction was seen as a safe subject for

[257] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Sir John Reith.
[258] TNA, HLG71/1254, Lord Reith's Press Conference on Post-War Planning, 8 April 1941, p.4.
[259] Cherry, Ibid, pp.122; Hasagawa, *Replanning the Bitzed City Centre*, p 7; TNA, HLG71/1254, Lord Reith's Press Conference on Post-War Planning, 8 April 1941, p.3.

this type of motivation, as physical rebuilding would be required regardless and the urban and economic problems of the interwar years could be tackled at the same time. It was also hoped that reconstruction would encourage greater civic responsibility and engagement amongst the public, and publications and broadcasts on the subject of reconstruction were produced to support this. The Town and Country Planning Association published a series of pamphlets entitled *The Rebuilding Britain Series* which discussed building and reform ideas. The BBC also helped to encourage debate via a radio series called 'Making Plans'.[260] Discussions around the nature of rebuilding were also encouraged within the armed forces and civilian societies. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs had within its discussion series a number of reconstruction subjects, including the homes of the future and the execution of city centre reconstruction.[261]

Outlets such as these built on the knowledge that people had acquired in the inter-war period and ensured that reconstruction and planning ideas were widely disseminated and discussed.[262] Local newspapers reveal that talks about physical reconstruction were common amongst local societies and groups, with professional planners and architects frequently engaged to offer their opinions on such subjects.[263] This spread of ideas became evident during the wartime debates around reconstruction, as the ideas expressed by the public in newspaper correspondence demonstrated quite a sophisticated grasp of planning.[264]

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[260] For full a synopsis of each episode, see the BBC Genome Project Radio Times entries for 1941 - http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/ (accessed 2/2/2017).
[261] B.S Townroe, 'Building the Post-war Home', *Army Bureau of Current Affairs,* Vol.56, 20 November 1943
[262] Hasagawa, *Replanning the Bitzed City Centre*, p.6.
[263] *Western Morning News,* 'Shaping the Plymouth of the Future', 23 July 1941; 'Plymouth Planning', 11 October 1941; 'Planning Policy', 9 October 1941.
[264] For examples see *Express and Echo,* Letters: 'Plans for City Prestige' from W. Lodge, 6 February 1945; *Western Morning News,* 'The future of Exeter: Divergent views of Rotarians' 26 January 1943.

It is notable that the discussions held by local organisations display a remarkable consensus in reconstruction ideas, reflecting the prevailing planning ideals and an understanding of the problems which local authorities wished to tackle. Local newspapers for the three cities frequently reported the meetings of local trade and social organisations, giving an insight into the opinions of their members on reconstruction matters. The general consensus was that the cities should be rebuilt anew as a symbol of triumph over adversity and that the need for reconstruction presented an opportunity to correct the problems of the past.[265] The need to replan roads in order to alleviate the traffic problems of the interwar era was recognised, especially in Plymouth where the tangled street pattern had caused particular problems. The idea of spacious, wide streets with ample planting to create a pleasant shopping atmosphere was also a frequent suggestion from groups in Bristol and Plymouth, although in Exeter there was slightly more desire to retain the existing street layout, which was felt to create a more 'artistic' atmosphere.[266]

Letters to the papers often express a desire for the new buildings of the post-war era to take on modern 'clean faced' designs, rather than trying to create replicas of destroyed buildings.[267] It was felt that replicas could never replace what had been lost, being only simulacrums of the original buildings. Thomas Sharp, Exeter's consultant planner, was a proponent of this view and recommended building anew in order to avoid 'a dead museum' of a city.[268] In addition to this, there was a good

[265] *Western Daily Press* 'Bristol of the Future' 21 January 1941*;* 'Bristol's Opportunity for Replanning', 11 February 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'Long Term Plan', 21 November 1941; 'Replanning Plymouth', 30 January 1942.
[266] *Western Morning News,* 'Letters to the Editor: Rebuilding Plymouth, 4 August 1941; 'The Future Exeter', 26 January 1943.
[267] *Western Daily Press,* Letters to the Editor 'The New Bristol', 4 November 1942.
[268] Thomas Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix* (London: 1946) p.87.

understanding of the wider social and economic reconstruction which would be needed post-war, again with support for such changes.[269]

These opinions are notable as the idea of consensus in favour of planning has been challenged within the existing literature. Susanne Cowan suggests in her work that it was planning professionals rather than the public who saw war damage as an opportunity, citing Julian Huxley's comment that 'the blitz has been a planners windfall'.[270] The presence of reports which give the opinions of local groups suggests that the idea of war damage representing an opportunity to address the problems of the past was not limited to planners, but was widespread amongst the citizenry of the South Western cities. The greatest proponents of this approach were generally those directly involved, such as the blitzed traders and property owners, but letters to the local papers also suggest that the wider public supported such ideas. Nick Tiratsoo's work on blitzed cities supports this view, noting the consensus in both the failings of cities and the proposed remedies in contemporary reports and plans.[271] In particular there was the feeling that cities had failed in their purpose, with people and traffic not circulating freely, inadequate housing and social inequality in terms of lifestyle and facilities; all opinions present in the South Western newspaper reports. Comprehensive planning was thought to be the remedy, as the piecemeal solutions of the past had not worked and the future of the whole population, not just the interests of the influential, needed to be taken into

[269] *Western Morning News,* 'Torquay Debaters; World reconstruction after the war', 10 October 1941; 'Build Up Anew', 22 November 1941.
[270] Susanne Cowan, 'The People's Peace: The myth of wartime unity and public consent for town planning' in Mark Clapson and Peter Larkham (eds.), *The Blitz and its Legacy* (London; Routledge,2013), pp.77-78.
[271] Nick Tiratsoo, Junichi Hasegawa, Tony Mason and Takao Matsumura, *Urban Reconstruction in Britain and Japan 1945-1955: Dreams, plans and realities* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2002), pp.1-2; Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-1955: Myths and realities', *Contemporary British History,* 4/1, (2000), pp.27-44.

account.[272] This very much reflects the opinions of local organisations in the South West, demonstrating that there was support and enthusiasm for replanning from traders and property owners.

Traders and property owners also recognised that such rebuilding would require a new approach to planning and building, supporting the idea of a 'master plan' to direct reconstruction. As such, they were supportive of radical methods to make replanning swifter and simpler, such as putting all of the blitzed land under single ownership. Doing this would mean that roads could be relaid and sites repositioned without having to negotiate the changes with each individual owner or lease, making the replanning quicker. At the end of the process traders and owners would be offered sites within the new layout, with the assumption that sites could be bought back. This approach was supported by trade groups in all three cities, with the local authority generally accepted as the most appropriate body to vest the land in.[273] It was assumed that new planning legislation would be forthcoming which would make this possible and would also allow local authorities greater control over planning than previous acts had. The presence of these opinions demonstrates that there was consensus for planning in the early years of the war, with traders and the public alike recognising that replanning was essential for post-war reconstruction.

Support for reconstruction came not only from local organisations, but also from local authorities and central government. Local authorities did view the destruction as a 'planners' windfall' to some extent, as the damage did offer an opportunity to

[272] Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-1955', *Contemporary British History,* 4/1, (2000), pp.28-29.
[273] TNA, IR 39/23, Redevelopment of Bombed Central Areas, 1941, p.5; *Western Daily Press,* 'Re-planning of Bristol', 8 May 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning Plymouth', 30 January 1942.

tackle many of their urban problems in one stroke. The need for better roads and purpose-built buildings for retail, civic and leisure provision had been acknowledged pre-war, with some efforts made towards tackling the problems. However, it had been almost impossible to mount a proper attack on nuisances as it would require the purchase and rebuilding of large swathes of standing property; something beyond the powers and finances of most local authorities. The war damage provided an opportunity to replan, as the building work would need to be undertaken regardless.

The enthusiasm at the local level for reconstruction plans was encouraged by the attitude of central government, which displayed a similar level of enthusiasm and support for reconstruction in the early years of the war. The creation of the Reconstruction Problems Committee and the Ministry of Works and Buildings demonstrated the commitment of central government to the concept of reconstruction. Reconstruction matters were discussed at Cabinet level from 1940 onwards, although the emphasis was often more on the economic and social aspects of reconstruction rather than physical rebuilding.[274] However, the creation of the Ministry of Works and Buildings and the appointment of Sir John Reith as Minister suggested the support of central government for urban replanning and reconstruction. Reith's pronouncements that blitzed cities should plan 'boldly and comprehensively' and 'not worry too much about the cost' reinforced this point, adding to the confidence and enthusiasm of local organisations and authorities in

[274] TNA, CAB 67/8/21, War Cabinet, 'Reconstruction of Town and Country: Memorandum by Minister of Works and Buildings', 7 December 1940; CAB 67/9/24, 'War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems; Composition and terms of reference', 21 February 1941.

replanning their shattered cities.[275] This initial support was partly due to the interwar experiences of urban problems and partly a way of bolstering morale on the home front. The Barlow Report had also underscored the importance of both urban and industrial planning in securing the best possible environments and economic structures. This coupled with the need for rebuilding work led to the initial enthusiasm for reconstruction and planning seen in central government between 1940 and 1942.

The government was also keen to ensure that the problems seen after the First World War, in terms of economic recession and a disordered demobilisation programme, were not repeated.[276] The housing shortage which followed the Armistice was also still fresh in the political memory, and it was recognised that planning could help to avoid a similar situation. It was sensed that the increased state intervention necessitated by the war could led to an acceptance of greater state intervention in economic and public life after the war, and that this could be used for the public good.[277] This was a direct echo of the First World War, when the building of municipal housing was accepted as necessary rather than representing interference in market forces by the government. As such, local authorities were promised fresh planning legislation which would provide a framework for reconstruction, allowing them greater control over urban development as well as dealing with war damage.

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[275] TNA, HLG71/1254, Lord Reith's Press Conference on Post-War Planning, 8 April 1941, p.4; *Western Morning News,* 'Begin Planning New Plymouth', 5 July 1941.
[276] TNA, CAB 66/27/27, 'Reconstruction Problems: Report by the Paymaster General', 1 August 1942, pp.6-8.
[277] TNA, CAB 67/8/121, 'Reconstruction of Town and Country: Memorandum by Minister of Works and Buildings', 7 December 1940, p.1; TNA, CAB 66/27/27, 'Reconstruction Problems: Report by the Paymaster General', 1 August 1942.

However, from 1943 there was retrenchment within central government regarding reconstruction and planning. Churchill in particular deemed the consideration of the post-war world detrimental to the war effort as it acted as a distraction. He felt that decisions about the shape of the post-war world should be paused until the war had been won and the public should concentrate on the job in hand.[278] The release of the Beveridge Report in 1942 had helped to push reconstruction as a concept into the social realm and firmly planted it in the public mind, adding to concerns about reconstruction becoming a distraction rather than an encouragement.[279] Reith was removed as Minister of Works and Planning in 1943, taking with him the pronouncements in favour of radical planning for city reconstruction. New planning legislation, promised as part of the toolkit for reconstruction, was slow to appear, and the general disinclination for radical reconstruction emanating from central government slowly trickled down to local authorities and blitzed traders. However, this took time, and it is notable that the plans of the three cities were shaped and formed even as this retrenchment was underway.

Planning, Consultation and the Role of the 'Master Planner'

Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all took slightly different approaches to replanning, with Exeter and Plymouth opting to employ a consultant planner, while Bristol chose an in-house approach. The extensive nature of reconstruction saw local authorities encouraged to employ professional planners to oversee their plans. There was concern within central government that without professional guidance blitzed cities

[278] Tiratsoo et al, *Urban Reconstruction in Britain and Japan,* p.6; Tiratsoo, The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-1955: Myths and realities', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), p.33.
[279] *Western Morning News,* 'Letters to the Editor Beveridge Report' 8 December 1942; 'Sir William Beveridge at Plymouth', 20 January 1943; *Western Daily Press,* 'The Beveridge Report', 19 January 1943; *North Devon Journal,* 'Beveridge Report', 18 February 1943

would find the task of reconstruction beyond their 'ability and imagination'.[280] However, the use of consultant planners tended to depend on the availability of staff and expertise in planning within the local authority. Some had large engineering or architectural departments with extensive planning experience which could create and execute large-scale plans successfully without recourse to consultants. This was the case at Birmingham, which had the experienced and respected planner and engineer Herbert Manzoni, who sat on several government panels during the war, and at Coventry in the form of city architect Donald Gibson.[281] All three of the South Western cities could claim such expertise within their staffs, with city engineers and architects who had been in post prior to the war and had overseen the interwar development projects.

However, all three cities had also used outside consultants at various times to provide a fresh perspective on city development. Exeter had employed Thomas Mawson to create a civic centre plan prior to the First World War and had also employed a firm of consultants in the late 1930s to revive the scheme.[282] Mawson had also been employed by Plymouth City Council in 1928 for their Central Park scheme.[283] Bristol City Council had employed Patrick Abercrombie to create the Bristol regional plan in 1930 for the joint planning committee of local authorities in

[280] TNA, HLG88/8 Advisory Panel on Redevelopment of City Centres, Memo to Secretary re reconstruction of City Centres, 4 February 1943; TNA, HLG 71/928 Planning: Financial Assistance for Reconstruction, 'Extract from file no. 95207/5 Memo from Mr Hill to Mr Vincent re Local authorities and the exchequer', 26 July 1941.
[281] Nick Tiratsoo, *Affluance, Reconstruction and Labour Politics* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.9-11; TNA, HLG88.8, 'Reconstruction of City Centres: Notes on Personnel for the Committee', 4 February 1943.
[282] Thomas Mawson, *Exeter of the Future* (1913); DHC, Exeter City Council Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1946, 3 February 1943. It is unclear whether ECC had approached the firm in question – Bradshaw Gass and Hope – as planners as well as architects regarding the proposed Civic Centre scheme.
[283] Janet Waymark, 'Civic Art and Thomas Mawson', *Landscapes,* 10/2 (2009), p.66.

the area.[284] This use of planners prior to 1939 demonstrated that local authorities understood the value of asking for expert, outside views on planning matters and that they had experience of dealing with such experts.

It was not just central government which felt that local authorities should make use of consultant planners for drawing up reconstruction plans. Calls quickly came from trader organisations for consultants to be employed. In Plymouth it was obvious that the level of destruction meant that rebuilding would be extensive, and there were calls for the appointment of an expert to oversee the work from both individuals and traders groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce.[285]

A similar situation could be found in both Bristol and Exeter, again driven by trader groups who felt that expert opinion was required.[286] This is particularly striking in the case of Bristol, where calls for a consultant to be brought in were made up until 1944, when the replanning was already well underway under the guidance of the City Engineer.[287] This example challenge the view forwarded in the existing literature that the use of consultants was imposed from above. The role of consultant planners has come under considerable scrutiny, with a trend toward viewing consultant planners as 'master planners' who controlled the whole of reconstruction planning in blitzed cities and imposed their views on an unwilling populace. The idea of the 'planners eye view' can be found in the work of Peter Larkham, David Adams and Alice Coleman, with planning consultants viewed as out-of-touch idealists intent

[284] Patrick Abercrombie and Bertrand Brueton, *The Bristol and Bath Regional Planning Scheme* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930).
[285] *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning of Plymouth', 10 July 1941; Letters to the Editor 'Rebuilding Plymouth', 4 August 1941; Letters to the Editor 'Post-war planning' 9 August 1941.
[286] *Western Daily Press,* 'Replanning of Bristol', 8 May 1941.
[287] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, Minute no.286, 21 June 1944

on social reconstruction via their plans.[288] This theme can also be found in studies on Plymouth and Exeter, with Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, and Malcolm Tait and Aiden While, making reference to it in their work on the plans for the two cities.[289] However, the presence of trader opinions demonstrates that the use of consultants was not imposed from above, but was often actively encouraged by local organisations to ensure high quality plans.

Bristol's decision to plan in-house reflected the City Council's interwar planning experience, having undertaken extensive housing and slum clearance programmes alongside their collaboration on a joint regional plan with the surrounding district councils. Bristol City Council were considered by central government to have been 'at the fore' of interwar planning as a result.[290] The Chief Planning Officer, Burtrand Brueton, had been in-post since 1923 and had overseen the 1930 Bristol and Bath regional planning scheme in tandem with Patrick Abercrombie. Brueton worked under the City Engineer, Marston Webb, who had been in post since 1932, and the City Architect, J.Nelson Meredith – in post since 1938.[291] The experience of both Brueton and Webb gave the Council confidence in them to design and execute a reconstruction scheme. Junichi Hasegawa suggests that the decision to plan in-house reflected this specific planning expertise, but also reflected a lack of a

[288] Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* (London: Hilary Shipman, 1985); Peter Larkham, 'Remaking Cities: Images, control and post-war replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24/5 (1997), pp.741-760; David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives*, 26/2 (2011), pp.237-260.
[289] Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interests and Pragmatism: Who remade Britain's blitzed cities?' *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4 (2007), pp.417-441; Aiden While & Malcolm Tait, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* Vol.24/1 (2009), p. 82.
[290] TNA, HLG88/9, Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of City Centres, Notes on a visit to Bristol 29-30 September 1943, p.2.
[291] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Bristol City Council Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 'Note of the conference of officers on planning in Bristol and district', 7 January 1943; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City,* p.18.

planning enthusiast amongst the councillors themselves to push for outside expertise and ideas.[292]

The combination of Brueton and Webb may have been seen as a safe choice, as they were both known quantities who could be relied upon to make cautious progress rather than a radical plan. Initially reconstruction was under the existing Planning and Public Works Committee, but a separate Planning and Reconstruction Committee was formed in 1942. This committee debated whether to use an outside consultant for the replanning, but eventually voted to appoint the City Engineer to act as chief planning officer.[293] Brueton was appointed to the role of Executive Planning Officer, working under the direction of the City Engineer.[294] It is clear, however, that the blitzed traders were not as confident in Brueton's abilities as they repeatedly called for the appointment of an outside consultant.[295] Max Lock did offer his services as a consultant to Bristol City Council in 1943, which traders urged the Council to accept. The Council would only accept Lock if he became a full, salaried member of staff, rather than acting as an independent consultant on a short-term contract, something which Lock was not prepared to accept.[296]

The approach to reconstruction was tentative compared with Plymouth and Exeter, reflecting Bristol's reluctance to create a comprehensive plan prior to the passing of fresh planning legislation. The City Council were also reluctant to proceed too far with a plan without any indication of the financial aid available to blitzed cities, as this

[292] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.69.
[293] Ibid, p.75.
[294] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 'Proposals of sub-committee', 26 January 1943.
[295] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, Minute no.286, 21 June 1944; *Western Daily Press,* 'Replanning of Bristol', 8 May 1941.
[296] TNA, HLG88/9, Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of City Centres, Notes on a preliminary visit to Bristol 1943, p.13.

would affect how radical rebuilding could be. The advantage of this cautious approach was that the Council consulted very widely and extensively with interested parties ahead of producing a plan.[297] This process of consultation later won the Council praise from central government, even though the resultant plan was not in fact welcomed by local traders.[298] Both the Planning and Public Works Committee (PPWC hereafter) and the Reconstruction and Planning Committee (PRC hereafter) consulted with traders and the Chamber of Commerce throughout the planning stages. Trader needs were surveyed and the minutes suggest that proposals for replanning were sought and welcomed by the PWCC, with numerous letters from traders and citizens minuted and responded to throughout 1941 and early 1942.[299] The PWCC also worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and other local groups via the Special Advisory Committee set up by the Chamber of Commerce in February 1941. The Advisory Committee appointed representatives from 118 different organisations, covering the arts, entertainment, industry, education, health, religion, social services and retail sectors of the city to ensure that all voices were heard by the PWCC.[300]

The Committee's interests were not restricted to city centre reconstruction, but also covered the building of new housing, industry and satellite towns. The Advisory Committee was extremely active, setting up at least one meeting with George Pepler, the town planning advisor to the Ministry of Health, in order to

[297] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.69, 73; TNA, HLG88/9, Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of City Centres, Notes on a visit to Bristol 29-30 September 1943, p.5.
[298] TNA, HLG71/597, Letter from Holford to Heck re Bristol planning, 5 June 1945; *Western Daily Press,* 'Praise for Bristol's Replanning', 17 July 1945.
[299] For examples, see BRO, Replanning and Reconstruction Officers Conference, Minute nos.3 & 10, Letters from the Bristol Traders Association and Round Table, 26 August 1941; Minute nos.18, 26 & 29, Letter from Boot's Pure Drug Co, Bristol Round Table and Chamber of Commerce, 13th November 1941; M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 'Suggestions and Representations submitted by Societies and from other sources', 12 October 1944.
[300] BRO, Replanning and Reconstruction Officers Conference, Letter from the Re-Planning Advisory Committee (Chamber of Commerce) to the Town Clerk re the interim report of the re-planning advisory committee, 27 July 1942.

discuss the challenges facing Bristol.[301] They evidently did this with the PPWCs blessing and consulted with them about what PPWC would like discussed at the meeting. This suggests a close working relationship and a good level of consultation between the PPWC and the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee did not have such a close working relationship with the RPC. The relationship soured after the Advisory Committee repeatedly requested to have members of the Committee co-opted onto the RPC following its creation in June 1942. The RPC resisted this idea, as they were concerned that the involvement of the Committee at this level could result in those with a vested interest in reconstruction having too much influence.[302] However, the views of these groups were considered important and the proposed relocation of the city's shopping area was based on the stated needs of traders. Bristol was also the only city to put a draft plan on public display for consideration and criticism by the public at large.[303] This wide consultation was reflected in Plymouth and Exeter, where the Councils also sought ideas and opinions from interested groups and individuals.

Plymouth City Council chose to approach Patrick Abercrombie, one of the foremost planners in Britain, as their consultant. It has become accepted that Abercrombie was the choice of the city's Lord Mayor, Viscount Waldorf Astor, rather than the City Council. Astor and Abercrombie were personally acquainted and it has been suggested by Essex and Brayshay in particular that Abercrombie worked on

[301] BRO, Replanning and Reconstruction Officers Conference, 'A conference of chief officers appointed to consider any suggestions or proposals by any person or society with reference to the replanning of the city' 23 April 1942.
[302] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.73.
[303] Jenner, 'The Origins of the Broadmead Shopping Centre', *Post War Bristol 1945-1965,* p.14; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City,* p.80.

Plymouth's plan as a personal favour to Astor.[304] The inference from Essex and Brayshay's work has been that Abercrombie's involvement therefore represented the workings of a small city elite who orchestrated the reconstruction process, rather than reconstruction planning being a collaborative process across local organisations.[305] However, this idea appears to stem from the earlier work of Crispin Gill in his *Plymouth: A New History,* as the city records and the reports of the Council meetings in the local press make it clear that the City Council itself wanted Abercrombie as a consultant because he was considered the best planner in the country. Letters from the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce also make it clear that the use of a consultant planner was encouraged and supported by the Chamber as well.[306] The personal connection between Astor and Abercrombie did, however, help to secure Abercrombie's services. Abercrombie was already involved with the plans for Hull and London, and the city had been warned that he might not be prepared to take on another project.[307] Astor's personal approach to Abercrombie with the Plymouth contract secured the latter's services where an approach from the Town Clerk might have been unsuccessful.

Abercrombie was not the sole creator of the Plymouth plan. It was instead a joint endeavour with the City Engineer and Surveyor, James Paton Watson, who provided local knowledge and expertise. The input of local traders and organisations was actively encouraged, with Plymouth's Chamber of Commerce and the

[304] Essex & Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interest and Pragmatism: Who remade Britain's blitzed cities?', *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4, pp.423-424; Gill, *Plymouth: A new history,* p.197-198.
[305] Essex & Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interest and Pragmatism', pp.423-424.
[306] PWDRO, Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence 1941 – 1943, Letter from Plymouth Chamber of Commerce to Town Clark re consultant planner, 10 July 1941; PWDRO, Plymouth City Council: Emergency Committee Minutes August 1941.
[307] PWDRO, Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence 1941-1943, Letter from Viscount Astor to George Pepler re engagement of Abercrombie as consultant planner, 8 August 1941.

Mercantile Associations being immensely active in the consultation stages of planning. As in Bristol, the Chamber of Commerce set up an Advisory Committee to work with the council, although they stopped short of wanting a direct voice on the Council committee.[308] Public meetings were held with Abercrombie in attendance which acted as a forum for these and other local groups, including religious and welfare organisations, to put their ideas and needs directly to the Council and their consultant.[309] In addition to this the views of individuals were sought. In particular, a call for women to put forward their views was made via the *Western Morning News* 'Femina' column in 1942.[310] Paton Watson himself made a plea for local people to submit their ideas and opinions on replanning to the Council, stating that 'It was the not duty of planners to force their plans upon the community'.[311] Admittedly this plea was made just as Paton Watson and Abercrombie were awaiting the publication of their plan, but evidently Paton Watson wanted feedback from those who would actually live and work in the proposed new estates and city centre.

Exeter City Council considered both the in-house and consultant methods for reconstruction planning. The Council initially decided to use a consultant planner for reconstruction and a list of potential planners was drawn up. The City Council had engaged the services of a planner prior to the outbreak of war to draw up plans for city centre redevelopment, and there were discussions as to whether this contract had to be honoured.[312] Evidently it was decided that it did not as interviews with the

[308] *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning of Plymouth: Traders say retain expert's services', 10 July 1941.
[309] *Western Morning News,* 'The New Plymouth', 20 June 1942.
[310] *Western Morning News,* 'Women can help plan Plymouth', 12 March 1942.
[311] *Western Morning News,* 'Planners need public's help: Engineers plea at Plymouth', 17 December 1943.
[312] DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: 3 February 1943.

preferred candidates were organised in February 1943. However, after short-listing the candidates and even selecting a favourite, the Council decided to postpone the appointment while survey work and consultations with traders were undertaken. By June 1943 the Ministry of Town and Country Planning was urging the council to make a decision either in favour of using in-house staff or to appoint a consultant.[313] The City Architect's and City Engineer's departments were approached, but the response of both departments was swift and negative. Both felt they were already overstretched by their current workloads, particularly with the minimal wartime staffing in each department.[314] Thomas Sharp was eventually selected as consultant planner in October 1943.[315] Sharp was solely responsible for Exeter's plan, although he did work closely with the City Architect and City Engineer and made use of the survey work already undertaken by various City departments.

Exeter City Council surveyed blitzed traders and called for citizens to give their ideas and views about reconstruction in 1942 and early 1943.[316] A wide range of local organisations were approached for ideas, from the expected traders groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to architectural groups, the Women's Institute, the Exeter Gardener's Society and the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Individuals were also encouraged to submit ideas and plans, with calls for citizens to submit their views on rebuilding made via the local press.[317] A special meeting of the Replanning Committee was held in May 1943 so that these ideas could be examined

[313] DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: 1 June 1943.
[314] DHC, Exeter City Council , Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: 3 February 1943, 10 February 1943, 16 February 1943.
[315] DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: 25 October 1943.
[316] DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: 18 March 1943.
[317]DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1945: Meeting minutes, 11 January 1943; Special Meeting minutes, 19 May 1943.

in more detail. Representatives of nine local organisations who had submitted ideas were invited to present them in person, as well as one representative from a firm of city architects and one individual with no organisational affiliation who had submitted his own city plan.[318] This consultation process was part of a range of preliminary work undertaken by the Council, with industrial and land use surveys produced as well.

This pattern of consultation demonstrates that the idea that all city plans were imposed from above by remote planners who had little interest in local people or their lives has been overstated. While the consultation processes were not quite as sophisticated as those used in modern planning, they were far more advanced than they have been given credit for. All three of the South Western cities deliberately sought the views both of those directly affected by central areas reconstruction, such as traders and property owners, and of other interested parties. Individual citizens were also encouraged to submit their own views about how their cities should be rebuilt to their councils. In addition to this type of consultation before and during the planning process, the finished plans for each city were also opened up to comment, criticism and amendment from interested parties and citizens.[319]

A further strand to the consultation process also existed in the form of the public enquiry, as all plans were subject to such enquiries once completed. The enquiry process was designed to ensure that all affected parties had the chance to raise objections or concerns, have them heard in a public arena and have them addressed by a body independent of the local authority. The public enquiries for the three cities took place in 1946 and are dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

[318] Ibid, Special Meeting minutes, 19 May 1943.
[319] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.80-81*; Western Daily Press,* 'Replanning of the Central area of the city, 31 March 1944.

New city concepts and the completed plans

The plans of the three cities were completed and presented to the public between 1943 and 1945. Plymouth's plan, entitled *A Plan for Plymouth,* was the first to be completed and was presented to the City Council in August 1943, with a public exhibition following in April 1944. Bristol's plan was also released in April 1944, but in a draft form only. At this stage blitzed cities still did not know what kind of legislative framework they would be working under, as the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act was not passed until November 1944. Bristol City Council had been reluctant to plan without new legislation and the decision to present a draft plan reflected this. The draft plan allowed them to gauge enthusiasm and approval for the proposals within it and to ask for feedback from traders and the public.[320] It appears to be the only time a city was presented with a draft plan.

Unlike the plans for Exeter and Plymouth, Bristol's plan did not have an identifying title and was produced in a more piecemeal fashion. The City Engineer initially presented the council with plans for the city's roads in 1943, with a complete planning report following in February 1944.[321] This report was made public in April 1944, with the report and plans put on display in the city art gallery.[322]

All three cities held public exhibitions of the plans to give citizens the opportunity to examine them and give comments and feedback. The exhibitions were extremely popular, with all three running for longer than originally planned. The *Plan for*

[320] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City,* p.87.
[321] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 17 February 1943; 'City Engineers Report on the Proposals for the Planning and Reconstruction of the Central Area of the City', 25 February 1944.
[322] *Western Daily Press,* 'Replanning of the Central Area of the City' 31 March 1944.

Plymouth exhibition was originally intended to run for three weeks until from 27 April to 20 May 1944 in the Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery, but its popularity was so great that the exhibition was kept open for a further week until 27 May 1944; it eventually attracted over 26,000 visitors.[323] Likewise, Bristol's exhibition, which was originally scheduled to run for a fortnight from 1 April to 15 April 1944, was extended for an additional two weeks until 29 April 1944.[324] Exeter's plan, entitled *Exeter Phoenix*, was initially presented to the public and City Council in May 1945, with the completed plan presented in December 1945.[325] An exhibition was held between 29 December 1945 and 19 January 1946, which attracted 28, 035 visitors. This amounted to nearly half of the city's population, possibly making the *Exeter Phoenix* the most visited reconstruction exhibition in Britain. [326]

The plans all followed the prevailing planning trends, particularly in terms of housing and road design, and presented ideas for solving the problems found in the pre-war city centres. In this sense the plans represent a continuation of the interwar development of the cities. The encouragement to 'plan boldly' saw the finished plans removing interwar street patterns in order to produce more efficient traffic systems and shopping areas better suited to the busy modern city. The problems of the remaining slum areas were tackled through the demand from central government for new housing schemes, with the most up-to-date thinking in neighbourhood planning put to use to improve living conditions. The need for rebuilding also allowed for new public buildings and facilities, with each city producing plans which included theatres, public halls and art galleries.

[323] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Plan' 19 May 1944.
[324] *Western Daily Press,* 'Things you should know today', 31 March 1944 & 18 April 1944.
[325] *Express and Echo,* 'Intimateness of Character Guide in City Re-Planning', 16 May 1945.
[326] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Replanning Committee, 26 February 1946.

Abercrombie and Paton Watson's *Plan for Plymouth* demonstrated this bold approach, as it entirely swept away the old street pattern of the city centre and replaced it with a new layout.[327] The centre piece of the new central area was a north-south axis road, later called Armada Way, which would create a new city vista from the railway station at North Road to the Hoe and the sea beyond. Running east to west would be another wide boulevard, Royal Parade, which formed part of a gyratory traffic system around the city centre. This system would carry traffic around the city centre rather than through it and would link the other major roads into and out of the city, alleviating the traffic congestions which had plagued the city pre-war. New open spaces would also be created by the road system, with a series of 'traffic circuses' forming rest gardens, while the centre of Armada Way would be planted as a garden walk. The centre itself would be pedestrianised, with further rest garden squares at major intersections.[328] The central area was heavily zoned for use, with retail, business and leisure districts all strictly separated. The central area had also been expanded to create a larger shopping district. This latter step had been taken because the Naval dockyard had indicated their intention to expand, and in doing so would swallow much of the existing shopping district in the Devonport area of the city.[329] The city centre was therefore enlarged to take the businesses displaced by this.

[327] See Appendix E, fig.23.
[328] Patrick Abercrombie & James Paton Watson, *A Plan for Plymouth* (Underhill: Plymouth, 1943), pp.70-74.
[329] TNA, HLG88/14, 'Report of Advisory Panel on the Redevelopment of City Centres', 2 August 1943, p.34. *Western Morning News,* 'The New Plymouth – A City of Distinction', 20 June 1942; 'Devonport is Assured', 4 March 1943.

Plymouth had suffered from extensive overcrowding in the central districts prior to the war, which the interwar estates had only partially relieved.[330] The damage to these districts meant that a detailed housing plan was required to both replace damaged dwellings and solve the overcrowding problems. The plan therefore contained proposals for new suburban housing estates, located around existing small hamlets and areas of agricultural land on the edge of the city.

Abercrombie and Paton Watson's use of existing hamlets was intended to give each of the new neighbourhoods a distinctive identity, and hopefully a sense of community as a result. Areas of agricultural land were to be retained in-between the new estates, a feature which is attributed to Abercrombie's influence. The concept of having green 'wedges' or a green belt around urban areas had been in use since the early 1920's, but Abercrombie had something very distinct in mind for the new Plymouth. Abercrombie wanted working farmland to separate the new estates, stating that this would bring farmers into closer contact with the town and their markets while helping city residents retain links with the land.[331] This aspect of Abercrombie's planning is often overlooked against the 'clean sweep' approach of city-centre planning, but it has been suggested that this in fact was the most radical aspect of the *Plan for Plymouth,* particularly when viewed against modern ideas about sustainability and traceability in the food chain.[332]

Surprisingly, the *Plan for Plymouth* did not make much provision for or recommendation about the future of industry in the city. Plymouth relied heavily on the dockyards for employment, and it seems that the intention of the Admiralty to

[330] Gordon Cherry, 'Lessons from the Past: Abercrombie's Plymouth', *Planning History,* 11/3, p.3.
[331] Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.40.
[332] Alan Powers, 'Plymouth: reconstruction after World War II' in Ockman, J. (ed.) *Out of Ground Zero: case studies in urban reinvention (*Prestel: Munich, 2002).

expand its dockyards was felt by Abercrombie and Paton Watson to be all the industrial expansion the city needed. However, the reliance on one industry or major employer had become undesirable after the experience of structural unemployment in many towns and cities during the 1930s. This was highlighted by the Barlow Report which recommended the development of a diverse industrial base, making this lack of industrial planning surprising. The plan simply recommended several areas suitable for industrial and warehouse buildings at Millbay, Prince Rock and Cattedown, all of which were existing industrial areas, and one new area for 'overspill' industrial building at Marsh Mills.[333]

It was common for post-war plans to recommend dedicated industrial areas in order to segregate industrial and warehouse buildings from other city functions. However, in Exeter and Bristol, the new industrial areas were also designed with an eye to future industrial expansion and diversification, something which was absent from the Plymouth recommendations for industry. This decision did become a source of anxiety throughout the 1950s and 1960s as there were sustained campaigns by the City Council to attract new industry to the city and land was earmarked for new industrial sites.[334]

The plan met with general praise on its release to the public in April 1944, particularly for the city centre layout and residential areas.[335] It was praised as being 'bold and practical' in its proposals to deal with the city centre and the old problems

[333]Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.26.
[334] Gill, *Plymouth: A New History,* pp.206-207; Plymouth City Council, *Plymouth for Industry* (Plymouth: City Council, 1960); Associated Industrial Consultants, *Plymouth Industry and Growth: A feasibility study prepared for Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council* (London: 1966).
[335] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth of the old sea dogs to be preserved', 27 April 1944; 'Plan seen by 1,800 people', 28 April 1944; 'Engineers see the plans', 29 April 1944; Letters to the Editor 'Plymouth Plan; Praise from an evacuee at Paignton' 2 May 1944.

of traffic congestion and narrow streets.[336] Representatives of the Municipal and County Engineers Association concurred with this opinion and further praised the *Plan for Plymouth* for its comprehensive approach to planning, including not only the issue of war damage but the future development of the city. It was felt that this would prevent the interwar scourge of urban sprawl by planning for population increases and ways to accommodate them.[337] The new Armada Way was praised by a number of correspondents and interviewees who felt that it would provide a fine new vista in the city.[338]

There were some minor criticisms, such as one citizen who felt that Armada Way should have a better focal point than the existing war memorial on the Hoe, which was dismissed as 'vulgar'.[339] This opinion seems strange today, because Plymouth's war memorial is now considered a particularly fine example. A further minor criticism was Abercrombie's suggested use of sub-tropical planting for the new squares and rest-gardens around the centre, as it was felt that native planting would be more sensible and pleasing.[340] Concern was also expressed at the potential cost of executing the plan and the need for new legislation to do it, particularly in terms of redistributing city centre sites on the new plan. However, it is evident that both problems were expected to be dealt with by central government in the near future via new legislation.[341]

[336] *Western Morning News,* 'Plan Seen by 1,800 People', 28 April 1944.
[337] *Western Morning News,* 'Engineers See the Plans: Plymouth visit – really practical solution', 29 April 1944.
[338] *Western Morning News,* 'Engineers See the Plans: Plymouth visit – really practical solution', 29 April 1944; Letters to the Editor 'Plymouth Plan; Praise from an evacuee at Paignton' 2 May 1944.
[339] *Western Morning New,* Letters to the Editor 'Plymouth plan and politics', 1 May 1944.
[340] *Western Morning News,* Letters to the Editor 'Plymouth plan and politics', 1 May 1944.
[341] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth plan discussed', 10 May 1944; 'A feminine vision of the new plan', 29 April 1944.

Bristol City Council took a similarly radical approach to replanning with the relocation of the main shopping district from the Wine Street/Castle Street area to Broadmead, an area just north of the old shopping district. The Wine Street area itself would become a new park to provide open space in the heart of the city.[342] The City Council proposed the move in order to create a more spacious centre which could accommodate larger sites, which many traders had indicated they wanted during the initial consultation. Additionally, the fire service had advised that buildings should be better spaced to provide proper fire breaks, as the fires caused by the blitz had spread quickly due to the congested nature of the old streets.[343] The net effect of the fire breaks and requested larger sites was that it was impossible to re-site all existing traders within the old Wine Street site. The new central area would be zoned for retail, business and leisure, and industry would be moved out of the city centre, a method also used in the Plymouth plan.

The whole of the new centre would be traffic-free and pedestrianised, with a new inner-ring road carrying traffic around the whole area. Further ring roads would carry through-traffic around the city rather than through it, easing congestion. A new civic centre would be created at College Green and a new market district at Victoria Road. There were also proposed extensions for the University and medical districts and a new 'education district' for the establishment of technical and industrial training facilities and youth centres.[344] Plans for additional industrial zones were included to house the small city-centre based industries which would be displaced by zoning and reconstruction. It was also intended that they would attract new industry to the city. The proposed new industrial sites were situated at Avonmouth,

[342] See Appendix D, figs.4 & 5 for current Castle Park layout.
[343] Mike Jenner, 'Origins of Broadmead Shopping Centre', *Post-War Bristol 1945-1965* (Bristol: Bristol Historical Society, 2000); Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.80.
[344] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 26 April 1944; *Western Daily Press,* 'Great New Bristol Scheme Revealed', 16 March 1944.

Bedminster and Brislington, close to existing industrial areas and working class housing districts.[345]

The plan did not include housing proposals, as the Council treated these as a separate concern and had begun plans for new housing ahead of city centre planning. Housing was recognised as an urgent concern for the city and by 1942 sites were already under discussion for new estates.[346] The Council was keen to learn from the interwar experience of housing provision and, as in Plymouth, the concepts of neighbourhood planning were firmly embraced as cure for the perceived ills of their interwar estates. As seen in both Plymouth and Exeter, the city was keen to reduce housing densities in the city centre and therefore the majority of new housing was to be located in new suburban estates. Areas were earmarked close to the interwar estates for further housing expansion, but unlike Plymouth or Exeter, Bristol also planned for some new city centre housing. It was recognised that some jobs, such as those connected to the docks, could not be moved out of the central area and therefore housing in the city centre would be required for these workers.[347] This eventually led to Bristol embracing flat schemes in a way that neither of the other South Western cities did.

Despite the long process of consultation undertaken by Bristol City Council, the Bristol plan was badly received by both traders and the wider public. The Broadmead proposal was unpopular, as was the plan to turn the Wine Street area into a new park. Traders were concerned that the removal from their old established

[345] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, *City Engineers Report on the Proposals for the Planning and Reconstruction of the...City,* 25 February 1944.
[346] *Western Daily Press,* Bristol's Post-War Housing Needs', 8 January 1943.
[347]BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 10 November 1943; Little, *City and County of Bristol,* p.318.

site would result in a permanent loss of trade.[348] This particular concern is echoed later by traders in Exeter and Plymouth and appears to have been widespread amongst blitzed traders. There was a very real concern that any disruption in location would result in shoppers abandoning the relocated businesses altogether.[349] The Bristol traders were the most vocal on this point from an early date, presumably due to the wholesale removal of the shopping area to a new location. Although the street plans in Plymouth and Exeter were radically altered, the shopping district remained in the same area as pre-war, albeit on a different layout.

There were also concerns that the Broadmead site would be flood-prone.[350] Broadmead had flooded badly during the nineteenth century, due to its proximity to the River Frome. This problem had been tackled in the interwar period with a new drainage scheme and had not flooded since. However, it was felt that there was still a flood risk and the subsoil would not be stable enough to build upon.[351] Flooding was also a concern amongst the wider public, who also felt the park plan to be unnecessary and a waste of valuable land. [352]

To the Council's credit, they announced that they were open to suggestions and alternative plans once the scheme had been unveiled.[353] The Council received a total of 340 suggestions and comments on the plan and a number of alternative plans for the city centre, including several from city organisations such as the Bristol

[348] *Western Daily Press,* 'The Draft Plan for Rebuilding Bristol', 22 May 1944; 'Bristol Retail Traders' 12 May 1944; 'Letters to the Editor', 18 May 1944, 19 May 1944, 24 May 1944.
[349] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files, Box 2, 'Proceedings at Public Local Enquiry...Exeter...10 July 1946 (Day 2), pp.60-61; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.81.
[350] *Western Daily Press,* 'Letters to the Editor', 18 May 1944
[351] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,000,000 for New Centre Sites', 13 June 1946.
[352] *Western Daily Press,* Letters to the Editor: 'The Draft Plan for Rebuilding Bristol' 18 May 1944; 'The Draft Plan for Rebuilding Bristol' 24 May 1944; 'Bristol Plan' 3 June 1944.
[353] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.80; The call was reiterated later in 1944 – *Western Daily Press,* 'Satisfy most – if not all – interests', 17 July 1944.

Retail Trade Association and the Rotary Club.[354] An exhibition of 27 of these plans was held in the City Museum and Art Gallery in July 1945 with the aim of putting all suggestions to the public and gathering opinions on them.[355] In addition to this, a model of the official City Council plan was made and exhibited three months later.[356] Bristol therefore continued to collect opinions and ideas for reconstruction long after the other South Western cities and demonstrates a much less 'top down' attitude to planning than is often attributed to post-war planning.

The objections to the Broadmead plan were taken seriously, but the Reconstruction Committee could not see a viable alternative. The continued consultation with city trade organisations and the wider public was an attempt to find an alternative which would suit everyone. Some compromises were found, such as the abandonment of the park proposal for the Wine Street area in favour of a civic centre. This idea was first mooted in September 1944, when the initial park plan was reviewed and opposed by trader groups, reinforcing City Councils concern for creating plans that were acceptable to all.[357] The civic centre would utilize the land for a selection of public buildings, including a new museum, swimming pool, library and public halls.[358] This proposal also placed a new Council House and Guildhall on the site instead of College Green, as proposed in the original plan. The council buildings met opposition as a new Council House had only just been completed at College Green

[354] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/1, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1944-1946: Further Report of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee concerning proposals for the replanning and reconstruction of the central area of the city, 6 June 1945, p.1.
[355] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1944-1946, 4 July 1945.
[356] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1944-1946: 7th November 1945.
[357] BRO, Replanning and Reconstruction Officers Conference, 'A meeting of the conference of officers held on the 20th day of September 1944', p.63.
[358] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1944-1946, 'Report of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee', 12 July 1945, p.4; *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Civic Centre Plan for Wine Street; Reserve site for city buildings', 13 July 1945.

and it was considered wasteful to immediately move the Council's headquarters. The council buildings were eventually removed from the scheme and a youth centre, which had been proposed for the extended educational district, was moved to the Castle Street site instead.[359] This plan was cautiously welcomed by traders who saw this as an improvement on the abandonment of a valuable site, but they continued to campaign for the area to be preserved as a shopping district throughout the 1940's.[360]

Thomas Sharp did not take quite such a radical 'clean sweep' approach in his plan for Exeter as Abercrombie and Paton Watson did, nor did he make the far-reaching changes seen in Bristol's plan. However, the *Exeter Phoenix* did heavily redesign the city centre, removing the tiny residential backstreets and courts behind the main streets and remodelling the existing street pattern.[361] The major shopping streets were to be widened and straightened while new bypass roads would carry through-traffic around the city rather than through it, relieving traffic congestion. The new bypass would also create a 'transport interchange' by building a new bus station adjacent to the road and opposite the Central Station. A new industrial district would provide for the growth of light manufacturing and would have the added benefit of allowing the riverside area, historically Exeter's industrial district, to be cleared for parkland and leisure. A further industrial area was created on the eastern side of the city to spread industry and jobs evenly across the city.

The new riverside park was one of several proposed open spaces with small rest gardens provided in the plan, along with a new city square. The city centre

[359] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1944-1946, Minute no. 258, 6 June 1945.
[360] *Western Daily Press,* 'Should Bristol Shopping Centre Be On Old Site?' 15 June 1946; 'An Instructive Enquiry', 28 June 1946;
[361] See Appendix F, fig.57

bypass was also designed to create a continuous garden around the city centre and open up the city walls to view. This 'green moat' is a feature found in other replanned walled cities and was a way of creating open space and preserving ancient features.[362] Provision was made for many new public buildings, including a new museum and art gallery, public halls and council buildings. As with Plymouth, Sharp had suggested residential plans that would reduce the city centre population, with suburban estates based on the 'neighbourhood unit' principal.[363]

On its initial presentation in May 1945, the *Exeter Phoenix* was generally met with praise, but attracted some criticism from traders regarding the design for the main shopping streets. The illustrations released with the plan outline showed arcaded shop fronts for the High Street, which were opposed by some city traders who felt that they would obscure window displays and reduce passing trade.[364] However, others saw the plan as potentially creating the best shopping centre in the West, which would be 'the envy of all neighbouring towns'.[365] On its formal release, the *Exeter Phoenix* was praised as a bold but well measured response to the war-damage.[366] This initial praise came from professional bodies, such as the Association of Surveyors, as well as councillors from across the region.[367] The opinions of trader groups and other parties with vested interests, such as the building federations, were also generally positive at the outset. Groups were invited to special viewings of the exhibition between 31 December 1945 and 8 January 1946

[362] Thomas Sharp, *Cathedral City: A plan for Durham* (London: Architectural Press, 1945); Stanley Adshead, *York: A plan for progress and preservation* (York; York Corporation, 1948).
[363] Thomas Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* pp.115-123.
[364] *Express and Echo,* Letters to the Editor 'Rebuilding of Exeter' 7 June 1945; Letters to the Editor, 11 June 1945.
[365] *Express and Echo,* Letters to the Editor 'Centre of the West', 11 June 1945.
[366] *Western Morning News,* 'Praised by Experts', 3 January 1945.
[367] *Express & Echo,* 'County Towns in Praise of Our City', 5 January 1946.

with Sharp himself present to explain the plan and answer questions. Traders and retailers approved the city centre plan and 'no destructive criticism was offered at this stage, but it was evident that this and other critical points for the business community would be carefully watched'.[368] Other groups such as the Rotary Club, the Townswomen's Guild and the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers also approved the plans and questioned Sharp closely on issues which were of importance to them, such as house building and the provision of parks and open spaces.[369]

The reaction of ordinary Exonians is a little more difficult to judge in the period immediately after the plan was released, as much of the correspondence with the local press appeared either before the plan's release or much later in 1946. However, the earlier correspondence with the *Express and Echo* during 1944 and 1945 suggests that there was support for a more radical remodelling of the city than Sharp presented. Several letters suggested the demolition of much of the remaining city centre in order to rebuild in a modern boulevard style; one such proposal suggested the creation of a city-centre by-pass road which would have left the Cathedral a traffic island surrounded by car parking.[370] The Exeter Gardeners' Society also expressed a wish for a more radical approach. In contrast to the rejection of the proposed city park in Bristol, the Society suggested that standing property should be cleared to create a city garden extending the length of the High

[368] *Express & Echo,* 'Mr Sharp's Cost Aim in New Plan of Exeter; City traders study site proposals', 31 December 1945 (City Final).
[369] *Express & Echo,* 'Community Units of Population; Exeter may have ten', 1 January 1946 (City Final); 'Builders Favourable to City Plan', 7 January 1946 (City Final).
[370] *Express & Echo,* Letters to the Editor 'Rebuild High Street', 22 February 1945; 'Plans for City Prestige', 6 February 1945.

Street, with the Cathedral and some surrounding buildings at its centre.[371] It is unclear how much support these suggestions garnered, but they demonstrate that Exeter's population was both engaged and imaginative in terms of planning ideas.

There were objections to some elements of the *Exeter Phoenix* but they appeared in small numbers. There were those who wished to see the city rebuilt as it was before the war, while others objected to specific aspects of the plan, such as the proposed industrial estate south of the river at Marsh Barton.[372] Marsh Barton was felt to present an inconvenient commute for workers, while the prevailing wind direction would blow smoke, fumes and smells from factories into the city.[373] The writer recommended that the proposed Pinhoe industrial estate should be the main industrial site instead of Marsh Barton to avoid these problems.[374]

It is notable that Exeter's blitzed traders and the City Council were generally supportive of the *Exeter Phoenix* on its release. There were some rumblings of alarm amongst councillors with regard to the potential cost of rebuilding and how it would be financed, but reassurances were made that the financial aspects of reconstruction would be addressed by government in the future.[375] It is interesting that this is the case, as the *Exeter Phoenix,* unlike Bristol's plan or the *Plan for Plymouth*, was released after the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 had been passed and the financial package for reconstruction presented. This would have made it clear that no specific aid for the reconstruction of buildings would be

[371] *Express & Echo,* 'Gardeners Views on New City', 7 March 1945.
[372] *Express & Echo,* Letters to the Editor 'Our City', 16 April 1945.
[373] This was a very pertinent observation as there have been ongoing problems with fumes and smells being blown into the city from Marsh Barton. For the most recent complaints, see the *Express & Echo* http://www.exeterexpressandecho.co.uk/smells-like-dead-bodies-excrement-making-lives/story-23856209-detail/story.html accessed 27/6/2016.
[374] *Express & Echo,* 'Letters to the Editor', 7 January 1945.
[375] *Western Morning News,* 'Praised by Experts', 3 January 1946; *Express & Echo,* Letters to the Editor, March 1946.

forthcoming beyond the war damage compensation, which was widely thought to be inadequate for providing new buildings.

However, blitzed cities had pledged to petition government for a better financial settlement, while it was known that a more comprehensive town planning bill would be forthcoming in the future that might revise the financial situation.[376] The assurances of some of Exeter's councillors that further financial assistance for blitzed city reconstruction evidently stemmed from the hope offered by these two things.

The financial and legislative framework for reconstruction was of great concern to blitzed traders and local authorities alike. Reith's initial pronouncements for reconstruction had reassured blitzed cities that both new planning legislation and financial aid would be made available to enable comprehensive reconstruction and are often cited in the early years of planning. However, all of the blitzed cities became increasingly anxious about these two elements since there appeared to be little movement by central government on either of them. The financial basis for reconstruction is particularly important as it dictated who rebuilt the blitzed cities and as such requires full consideration. The complexities of drawing up legislation and the debates on financial aid to blitzed cities are dealt with in full in the next chapter. What follows is a brief an outline of the legislative and financial framework in order to put the concerns about the reconstruction plans of the three cities in their immediate context.

[376] See PWDRO,1495/41 Lord Mayors Secretaries Replies: Tabulated Replies – Lord Mayors and Mayors Blitzed Cities Replanning, 1943-1944.

Despite the appearance of slow progress, central government had been developing legislation for dealing with post-war reconstruction since 1940. However, the extensive nature of post-war reconstruction, which covered not just the rebuilding of war damage but areas such as industry, welfare and demobilisation, meant that the creation of a new town planning act took some time. The Town and Country Planning Act 1944 finally passed into statute in November 1944. [377]

It was more popularly known as the 'blitz and blight' act as it allowed local councils to buy blitzed land and any adjacent areas considered to be 'blighted' and in need of regeneration in order to create a cohesive plan. The land would then be under single ownership and therefore could be replanned without having to negotiate the changes with each individual owner or lessee. All of the owners and lessees would be offered new sites within the new layout at the end of the process, but on a leasehold rather than freehold basis. Government loans were to be made available for the purchase of land, with reduced rates of interest and repayment for the first ten years of the loan. The act also offered assistance against the loss of rate revenue for local authorities during the initial period of reconstruction.[378]

However, there were no financial provisions for actual rebuilding, as the government was not offering any assistance for owners of damaged or destroyed property. Instead the war damage compensation scheme for property owners would be the only source of building finance. The government had also followed the Treasury recommendation to make some types of compensation payment unavailable if property owners moved from their original site, something which was often required under reconstruction schemes. It was this lack of financial support for reconstruction

[377] Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.1,* pp.104-106, 127-129.
[378] Ibid*,* pp.118, 125.

which created a swell of opposition to city reconstruction plans amongst traders. Without any further financial assistance traders and property owners were reliant on their war damage compensation claims meeting the cost of rebuilding. However, the decision not to make compensation payments mobile in cases of replanning left many with a payment which was widely acknowledged as inadequate to meet current building costs.[379] It was these issues which began to erode general support for the reconstruction plans, as property owners and traders found that they were unable, or unwilling, to build under the new framework.

The Place of Housing in Reconstruction Policy

Housing was given a high priority by both local authorities and central government. The combination of war damage, the cessation of house-building and a higher than expected rate of family-creation during the war combined to create a post-war housing shortage which rivalled that seen after the First World War.[380] Both local authorities and central government also recognised the on-going need for slum clearance and the re-housing of slum dwellers. As a result, planning for housing began before many city reconstruction schemes had been completed.

In 1944 the government began an Advanced Preparation of Housing Sites programme (APHS hereafter) to allocate sites for housing and begin the groundwork prior to the end of the war. Labour was due to be released from the completed programme of airfield construction, and the resources diverted into the preparation

[379] TNA, HLG 88/10, 'The degree to which war damage payments will contribute towards financing the redevelopment of city centres', 31 May 1943; *Western Morning News,* 'High Court Action Threatened' 1 May 1946.
[380] Marion Bowley, *Housing and the State 1914-1944* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1945), pp.3-4.

of sites.[381] In March 1944 the government instructed local authorities to begin identifying land in their ownership which could provide sites for up to two thousand houses and start planning a programme of house-building.[382] Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth had all bought land prior to the outbreak of war for extending their housing programmes, allowing them to quickly identify suitable sites. However, the approach to housing demonstrates how housing and city centre planning became separate strands of the reconstruction programme, cutting across each other and occasionally causing conflict.

Within the South West, the approach to planning dictated how much of a divergence there was between housing plans and reconstruction plans. The *Plan for Plymouth* was completed ahead of the APHS scheme, while the *Exeter Phoenix* was completed afterwards. In both cases parts of the plans had to be changed to fit the demands of the APHS programme. Bristol was more successful with its housing plans, possibly because all of the planning was undertaken by in-house staff. Bristol City Council was also considerably more dynamic in its planning for housing than for city centre reconstruction, submitting proposals to the Ministry of Health in January 1943 for 35,000 post-war homes to be built over ten years.[383] The housing application was submitted ahead of the Government's implementation of the APHS programme and the Council was therefore well advanced in its planning for housing by the time this scheme came into operation. It had already identified 4,000 plots which were available for house building in January 1943, 1,377 of which were

[381] TNA, HLG101/455, 'Advanced Preparation of Housing Sites: Circular 14/44', 21 February 1944.
[382] DHC, City Engineers & Surveyors Papers Box 64, Housing A.P.H.S – Letter from senior regional officer of the Ministry of Health re advanced preparation of housing sites, 4 March 1944.
[383] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol's Post-War Housing Needs', 8 January 1943.

already served with sewers and services.[384] Bristol therefore had little trouble in fulfilling the APHS requirement for space to build 2,000 houses immediately the war ended. The advantage of both this early planning and Bristol's in-house approach to planning was that its housing and wider town planning aims could be developed in conjunction with each other. This did not always happen in other blitzed cities, with the two sets of plans sometimes cutting across each other, as demonstrated by Exeter and Plymouth.

Plymouth, like Bristol, had a large housing problem to tackle, particularly as it still had the overcrowding problem of the interwar era to deal with. A programme for 10,000 dwellings was settled on in 1944 in order to deal with the immediate housing problems and land was earmarked for the required 2,000 houses for the APHS programme. Sites for 358 dwellings were immediately available using land already in the Councils ownership.[385] The *Plan for Plymouth* earmarked further sites around the city for housing, most of which did indeed become housing estates post-war.

However, as the *Plan for Plymouth* predated the APHS programme, there were some conflicts between the two over housing sites. In one case, the Ministry of Town and Country Planning intervened, which led to parts of a proposed 'reserved agricultural zone', designed to separate estates, being used to extend the North Prospect and Swilly estates as they could be easily and quickly developed. The proposed reservation had also been designed to protect some existing features of the landscape, as well as ensuring that the residents of the estates would have access to open countryside. In particular Abercrombie and Paton Watson were keen to preserve the existing lanes within the area, as they felt that 'the widening or

[384] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol's Post-War Housing Plans', 15 September 1943.
[385] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Housing', 15 September 1944; 'Plymouth Houses', 18 October 1944.

development of either of these....would be sheer vandalism'.[386] One of the lanes which Abercrombie and Paton Watson wanted to preserve became one of the main roads through the resulting estate.

Exeter presents a further example of the APHS programme and reconstruction plans cutting across each other, as the housing plan had to be formed before Sharp had completed his plan. Sharp did have some input in the choice of housing sites, and objected strongly to some of the proposed sites as he felt they were too far from the city centre. Land already in the Council's ownership formed the basis of their housing plans, but large new areas were required to fulfil the housing need. Exeter City Council selected two new sites for large estates at Countess Wear and Hollow Lane, with which Sharp strongly disagreed because he considered that they were too far from the city centre, would contribute to urban sprawl and were outside the urban fence.[387] However, the City Council had to respond to the governments demands to earmark residential sites before Sharp's plan was completed, which led to parts of Sharp's plan being superseded before it was published. Some of his proposed roads around the periphery of the city became impossible to execute, as they would now cut right through a residential area, and as such had to be scrapped.[388]

The APHS programme and the subsequent need to identify housing sites marks the divergence of two strands of reconstruction. Cities had been planning their housing needs as part of the wider reconstruction plans, but the pressure to find sites and

[386] Abercrombie & Paton Watson, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.33.
[387] DHC, 5872 Exeter City Archives, City Panning Office – T Sharp, Reconstruction of City and permanent housing sites, Letter from Sharp to Steel (MTCP) re housing sites, 24 May 1945; The urban fence was the inner city boundary.
[388] Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* p.121 – diagram of proposed bypass roads and original 'neighbourhoods'.

prepare them quickly meant that housing plans often overtook central areas planning. As seen in Exeter and Plymouth, this meant that housing had to be planned and undertaken separately from other planning. This separation of housing and city centre planning meant that the two strands began to be thought of as entirely separate programmes, rather than both being part of the wider post-war reconstruction of Britain. Blitzed traders complained in all three cities that materials and labour were available for building and were being deliberately denied to traders by the local authorities. The basis for this accusation appears to be the progress being made in other areas, such as housing, industrial building and educational building. The progress in other building gave the impression that materials and labour were plentiful and added to grievances of the blitzed traders who believed that the lack of progress was entirely due to the actions of local authorities.[389]

The separation of housing from the wider planning strategy in each city became significant because if reconstruction planning had remained as a more holistic concept, encompassing housing, industry, central areas and services as it had done originally, the battles between blitzed traders and local authorities might have been eased. It is also significant in that reconstruction and post-war housing tend to be studied as separate entities rather than as two parts of a whole, with the result that the impact of having to prioritise one type of rebuilding over another is not always acknowledged.

Housing was prioritised within reconstruction since the need for shelter far outweighed the need for rebuilt retail or leisure premises, both in terms of war damage and slum clearance. Surveys undertaken by groups such as Mass

[389] *Western Daily Press,* 'Letters to the Editor: Nation of Clever Fools', 11 March 1946;

Observation revealed housing as the most important post-war concern for the majority of people and was considered more important to morale than rebuilding city centres.[390] As such, materials and labour were directed towards this urgent concern both in terms of building new houses, providing temporary homes and completing first aid repairs on damaged homes to make them habitable again. Certainly this prioritising of housing was initially understood by blitzed traders who acknowledged that housing was the priority in the first years after the war, particularly as planning for central areas work was still underway. However, the divergence of housing and other types of planning away from a comprehensive plan to what appeared to be a series of separate schemes led blitzed traders to the conclusion that local authorities were putting too much emphasis, and by extension resources, into housing and deliberately depriving central areas of the same resources.

Conclusions

The plans produced by Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all drew on the developments in urban planning seen during the interwar period and the continuing professionalization of planning as a discipline. Exeter and Plymouth benefited from the expertise of two of the country's foremost planners, Patrick Abercrombie and Thomas Sharp, who were at the cutting edge of planning for the period. The two planners produced plans which covered not just the rebuilding of war damaged areas, but provided solutions for ongoing urban problems such as traffic congestion as well as applying new housing ideals. However, the role of the consultant planner as 'master planner' does not stand up to scrutiny when the experiences of all three

[390] Mass Observation File Report 1352A, 'What Britain Thinks About the Post-War World' 20 July 1942, p.3; Mass Observation File Report 2265, 'General Election Questionaire', July 1945, p.9.

cities are examined. Although Exeter and Plymouth employed professional consultants, they did not work in isolation in producing their plans. In Plymouth, the City Engineer, James Paton Watson, provided the local insight which was essential to replanning the city. The plans to extend the central shopping area in order to house businesses displaced by the expansion of the dockyard are an example of this. Paton Watson had dealt with the Admiralty prior to 1939 and had been aware of previous plans to expand the dockyard, giving him an insight into the potential for post-war expansion. Likewise in Exeter, the City Architect and City Engineer both had input into Sharp's plan, although they did not work in partnership with Sharp as Paton Watson did with Abercrombie.

It must also be noted that neither Sharp nor Abercrombie were employed by the respective councils to execute their plans. Sharp was only employed to draft the plan, with his contract ending once the plan was completed and presented to the Council; after 1946 Sharp was occasionally asked for advice, but had no direct input into reconstruction. Abercrombie was retained until 1947 by Plymouth City Council, but as rebuilding did not begin in earnest until after 1948, he too had little direct influence on the rebuilding work.[391] Neither planner directed the architectural treatment for the cities either, making suggestions for the architectural style of the new buildings but not imposing their ideas on the cities.[392] As such, it was the council staffs who directed the final rebuilding process. Bristol's planning process was done entirely in-house, using only staff which had direct experience of both Bristol's needs and the interwar problems that the city had faced.

[391] Essex & Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interest and Pragmatism: Who remade Britain's blitzed cities?', *Planning Perspectives,* 22/4, 2007, p.421; *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Plan was Torn Up' 7 October 1947.
[392] Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.77; Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* pp.109-110

The consultation process in Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth demonstrates further that the idea of the 'master planner' is flawed, as the respective councils and chief planning officers sought the views of an extensive range of groups throughout the planning process. All three cities also encouraged their citizens to put forward ideas and suggestions, a process which was continued after the plans were completed. Bristol in particular demonstrated the ongoing process of consultation with the attention the Council gave to the suggestions and amendments on the draft plan. Exeter presents an excellent example of the early consultations undertaken prior to a plan being drafted, with its calls for ideas and suggestions for rebuilding ahead of Sharp's appointment. The records suggest that the postponement of Sharp's appointment may have been deliberate in order to collect the opinions of citizens.[393] The material was made available to Sharp along with the surveys into pre-war land use and property, giving them equal weight with technical data. The processes for consultation may not be considered as sophisticated as those of modern planning schemes, but it is notable that they involved local people from the start rather than just asking for opinions once the plans were complete. In this sense the planning process was not as 'top-down' as is often suggested.

The issue of consensus in planning is brought sharply to the fore with the erosion of support for reconstruction after 1944. However, the decline of support amongst traders and property owners has a very definite focus in the form of the Town and Country Planning Act 1944. The initial support for both the reconstruction plans and proposed method for rebuilding via pooling land ownership is striking when

[393] DHC, Exeter City Council, Replanning Committee Minutes, 18 March 1943

compared to more critical views about consensus, such as Susanne Cowan's.[394] It is particularly notable that the professional bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Multiple Traders, were supportive of comprehensive reconstruction on this basis, as in theory the members of these groups would stand to lose if ownership of land was pooled. That this support remained firm in Exeter and Plymouth on the release of the plans reinforces the idea that consensus for planning was more widespread than has been given credit for. Bristol is the exception to this, although the lack of support is based on the same reasons which saw support decline in the other cities; namely money. Bristol traders were anxious that the wholesale removal of the shopping district to another site would damage trade and deprive them of the finance to build. The latter fear was well founded, as the 1944 act did not allow for any additional finance for rebuilding beyond war damage compensation payments, and did not allow for these to move with their owners. It was these clauses which began the shift of opinion amongst traders in Exeter and Plymouth.

Amongst the wider public, planning attracted varying levels of support. Although planning was a popular topic in discussion groups, it is notable that the majority of reported talks were given by those connected with the planning profession.[395] It is not clear how enthused the public were by these ideas, only that they were widely discussed and considered. The opinions of individuals also appear to wax and wane according to how prominent planning and reconstruction were. The announcement of new initiatives and ideas in reconstruction, both in terms of physical replanning and social reconstruction, prompted fresh waves of correspondence with the local

[394] Cowan, 'The People's Peace', in *The Blitz and its Legacy,* pp. 73-86
[395] *Western Morning News,* 'Ordered Development', 20 August 1941; 'Long Term Plan', 21 November 1941;

papers, suggesting that the public needed a specific object to pique their interest in the subject. As more elements were added to reconstruction, away from just the rebuilding of bombed towns, the interest became more dispersed, with individuals beginning to concentrate on the elements which would affect them directly, such as housing. The release of the Beveridge Report accelerated this process, as reconstruction now promised not only rebuilding, but also social transformation. As such, consensus for planning did not so much fade away as dissipate into different areas.

The plans of Exeter and Plymouth were initially well received, but underwent many changes in the years after their release. Bristol's plan, in contrast, was criticised from the beginning, with the Council having to make changes and concessions immediately. This process of change and dissent will be considered in the next chapter, along with the growing financial and practical obstacles that the three South Western cities faced.

Chapter Three: Ownership and Objections 1940-1946

As blitzed cities began to work on reconstruction plans, the question of a legislative and financial toolkit for executing reconstruction was considered by central government. It was recognised from 1940 that blitzed cities would require fresh planning legislation to enable them to replan and rebuild. The question of finance for reconstruction also had to be addressed, along with the wider issues of national reconstruction affecting public and social services, and industry. These broad demands in building a post-war nation created divergence in the definition of reconstruction, with the term being interchangeable between war damage reconstruction and national reconstruction. This in itself created different expectations between blitzed cities and the central government departments dealing with reconstruction in terms of legislative powers and funding for reconstruction. This divergence and the process of creating planning legislation will be examined in this chapter as factors in the decline of planning enthusiasm and consensus.

Within the current body of reconstruction literature, the theme of consensus for planning is heavily linked to the concept of ‘top-down’ planning. In the previous chapter, this latter theme was examined and found to have been overstated, with consultation in planning proving to have been more extensive than is usually argued. It is clear, however, that enthusiasm and consensus for planning did decline after the three South Western cities produced their plans. This phenomenon is common to all blitzed cities, with consensus for planning steadily waning from around 1944. This trend is often conjoined with the theme of ‘top-down’ planning, as it is frequently suggested that the imposition of plans was the cause of dissent for replanning and

reconstruction.[396] However, the decline in enthusiasm is most clearly seen amongst property owners and traders, rather than the general public, and occured in the wake of the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act 1944. This decline in enthusiasm and consensus transmitted itself to the public as a whole as traders and property owners expressed their objections. Within this chapter we will examine the provisions of the Act and its impact on reconstruction. This impact can be most clearly seen through the public enquiries held into the plan of each city, which laid out the objections of property owners and traders for scrutiny. It becomes clear from this process that the decline of support for reconstruction stems directly from two clauses within the 1944 Act which changed land tenure and the basis of compensation to blitzed property owners.

Legislation, Local protest and Agitation

It had been understood by both local authorities and central government that to undertake effective replanning and rebuilding new legislation would be required. The planning acts of the interwar years had not proved effective in dealing with urban problems such as building congestion and transport infrastructure as they left property rights almost entirely intact. In addition to this, urban sprawl could not be effectively combated as the development rights of property owners could not be overridden without difficulty or expense on the part of the local authority. In order to rebuild anew, rather than just rebuilding on old lines, local authorities required new powers to allow them to direct rebuilding. There was also the question of financing reconstruction, either through compensation to individual property owners or as

[396] See for example Susanne Cowan, 'The People's Peace: The Myth of Wartime Unity and Public Consent for Town Planning' in Mark Clapson & Peter J Larkham (eds) *The Blitz and It's Legacy* (Routledge: London, 2013), pp.73-86.

block grants to cities. Central government was alive to both of these problems from 1940 and indicated to blitzed cities that both new legislation and a financial package would be in place before the end of the war. However, the drafting of legislation was protracted and complicated, involving a large number of committees and ministerial departments, with the problems of land ownership and compensation proving particularly acute. Reith's Ministry of Works and Buildings main role after its creation in October 1940 was finding a legislative solution for reconstruction.[397] The lengthy process of drafting legislation made blitzed cities uneasy, as they feared that the legislative and financial frameworks they required would be neglected.

Initially, the government concept of post-war reconstruction was the urban and industrial development of Britain rather than the rebuilding of bomb damaged areas. The release of the Barlow Report on land use in May 1940 had highlighted the problems which the poor location of industry could create, such as structural unemployment. The clustering of new industries around the South East presented further problems as the growth of towns, and of London in particular, was exacerbating the housing problems and furthering the problem of urban sprawl. The initial proposals for reconstruction were therefore all based around these problems rather than the issue of war damage.

The concept of reconstruction as an industrial and economic issue rather than one of bomb damage is evident in all of the early discussions about reconstruction. Reith's outline of reconstruction and what would be required does not make mention of bomb damage and it makes up only one line in a more detailed outline of

[397] TNA, CAB 67-8-121, 'War Cabinet: Reconstruction of Town and Country. Memorandum by Minister of Works and Buildings', 7 December 1940

reconstruction needs in February 1941.[398] This concept of reconstruction can be found in local newspaper reports and editorials on the post-war world up until the end of 1940, with the recommendations of the Barlow Report very much at the fore of reconstruction ideas.[399]

The importance of this emphasis is that reconstruction as a concept was not the product of bomb damage, but had been in place prior to this as a method for developing industry and re-establishing the economy post-war. When blitzed cities were later told by Reith to 'plan boldly and comprehensively', it was in this context.[400] The bomb damage made it necessary to rebuild blitzed cities regardless, but it was by planning that the cities would be improved rather than just rebuilt. It also partially explains the later disconnect between the expectations of blitzed traders and local authorities compared with those of the Treasury in terms of finance for reconstruction.

The Treasury was more concerned with funding reconstruction work which was directly associated with economic and industrial reconstruction, such as infrastructure projects and industrial building, rather than repairing bomb damage. Blitzed cities provided an opportunity for experiment and research in terms of how local authorities might go about applying the recommendations of the Barlow Report and the new planning ideals.[401] By encouraging blitzed cities to plan 'boldly and comprehensively', Reith and the various planning committees could assess what

[398] TNA, CAB 67/9/13, *War Cabinet: Reconstruction of Town and Country – Report by the Lord President of the Council,* 6 February 1941.
[399] *Western Morning News,* 'Conurbation' 1 February 1940; 'New Britain After the War' 2 February 1940; 'Planned Development' 9 May 1940; *Bristol Evening Post,* 'War Effort', 29 December 1939; *Western Daily Press,* 'Plan for Post War Prices' 14 August 1940.
[400] TNA, HLG 71/1254, 'Lord Reith's Press Conference on Post-War Planning', 8 April 1941, p.4; *Western Morning News,* 'Begin Planning New Plymouth', 5 July 1941.
[401] TNA, HLG 71/1254 , Minutes of the proceedings of Lord Reith's press conference on post-war planning, 8 April 1941, pp.4-5; *Western Morning News,* 'Shaping Post-War Reconstruction', 27 February 1941.

would be required from new legislation in order to allow all local authorities to deliver reconstruction plans. Reith set this out in his 1941 press conference on the subject of reconstruction, explaining how his Ministry had conducted a number of test surveys with Coventry, Birmingham and Bristol to assess the needs of reconstruction legislation. Reith stated that 'We told them to do it boldly and comprehensively and not to bother too much about this or that, certainly not to bother about private ownership of property', instead telling the test cities to plan as if they had the necessary powers and circumstances to execute the plan they wanted, not the plan that would be possible under current legislation.[402]

The advice to 'plan boldly' and the use of test surveys in a number of medium-sized blitzed cities firmly turned the concept of reconstruction to one of rebuilding bomb-damaged areas rather than economic reconstruction in the minds of blitzed traders and local authorities alike. The intimation that exchequer assistance would be available to execute reconstruction schemes in full reinforced this association. Blitzed cities were also given to believe that new legislation to allow this would also be in place swiftly, something which the test surveys only reinforced, despite Reith's efforts to dispel this idea.[403]

It was recognised from the outset that the automatic right of property owners to develop their land as they saw fit needed to be curtailed. Prior to the war, local authorities had been powerless to prevent unsuitable development owing to these rights and the compensation clauses contained with the planning legislation.

[402] TNA, HLG 71/1254, Minutes of the proceedings of Lord Reith's press conference on post-war planning, 8 April 1941, p.4.
[403] TNA, HLG 71/1254, Minutes of the proceedings of Lord Reith's press conference on post-war planning, 8 April 1941, p.4.

Development could be prevented but local authorities were liable to pay compensation against the loss of value for the land owner. This was paid against the most profitable potential use of the land, even if the land was not to be developed in that way. It was therefore decided early on in the reconstruction debates that the automatic right of property owners to develop must be removed.[404] It was also recognised that the simplest way to effect comprehensive redevelopment in towns would be to put all the land under single ownership, which would remove the problems of negotiating with multiple owners and lessees.[405] This idea was evidently widely disseminated, as trade groups in all three South Western cities referred to it during 1940 and 1941, and supported it as a tool for effective rebuilding.[406]

Removing development rights and putting blitzed city centre land under single ownership raised questions about land ownership and compensation, leading Reith to commission a study in 1941 to examine these questions. Reith favoured the creation of a national land board to administer all planning and development, which would also hold the development rights of all land. Likewise, if land in city centres was to be acquired for reconstruction an appropriate body to hold the land was required, and in all cases compensation would have to be paid. In addition to Reith's commission, the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment, better known as the Uthwatt Report after the Committee's chairman, Sir Augustus Andrewes Uthwatt, was considering these questions.[407] The Committee recommended the setting up of a central planning authority and the sterilizing of land in 'reconstruction

[404] TNA, CAB 67-8-21, 'Reconstruction of Town and Country: Memorandum by Minister of Works and Buildings', 7 December 1940; HLG 86/1, 1940 Council 'State acquisition of development rights of undeveloped land' 27 October 1941; IR 39/23, 'Redevelopment of Bombed Central Areas: Memorandum by the Ministry of Health', 1941, p.1.
[405] TNA, IR 39/23, 'Redevelopment of Bombed Central Areas: Memorandum by the Ministry of Health', 1941, p.3
[406] *Western Daily Press,* 'Re-Planning of Bristol' 8 May 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning Plymouth', 30 January 1942.
[407] *Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment: Final Report/ Chairman; Uthwatt,* (London: HMSO, 1942).

areas' in its interim report in June 1941. The sterilization of land would allow local authorities in war-damaged areas to prohibit building until a reconstruction plan had been produced, preventing land speculation through the buying and selling of bomb-damaged sites prior to reconstruction. The Uthwatt Committee also recommended the adoption of a ceiling price for public land acquisition based on the property values at 31 March 1939.[408]

The question of finance for reconstruction was initially addressed via the War Damage Acts 1941 and 1943, which provided compensation to property owners for war damage. The roots of the two acts could be found in the pre-war development of town planning and the defence preparation work of the late 1930s. The destructive potential of modern warfare had been recognised by both the insurance industry and local authorities by the mid-1930s. The Association of Municipal Corporations (AMC hereafter) had first raised concerns about aerial bombardment and financial provisions to repair such damage in 1936.[409] By 1936 all of the major insurance companies had stated that they were not willing to underwrite war damage in the event of another war, suggesting that the AMC was reacting to wider concerns about future wars. The threat of aerial bombardment meant that war damage claims could potentially run into the hundreds of millions of pounds and the underwriters were not prepared to cover this.[410]

[408] *Western Morning News,* '"Big Three" to Rebuild the New Britain', 18 July 1941.
[409] PWDRO, Associate of Municipal Corporations: Acquisition of Land – notes on a deputation from the AMC, London County Council and Members of Parliament to the Minister of Town and Country Planning... 1 December 1943, p. 1.
[410] TNA, CAB 24-269-19, Committee of Imperial Defence, *War Risks Insurance: Damage to property in this country by enemy aircraft,* 12 April 1937, p.1; Robert L Carter and Peter Falush, *The British Insurance Industry Since 1900: The era of Transformation* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Palgrave, 2009), p.52.

In 1937 the government considered whether a national war damage insurance scheme could be undertaken by the government instead, but the costs were quickly deemed too high. Even with a high premium being charged to property and business owners, the largest amount they could hope to raise per year was five million pounds. The projected potential claims came to five million pounds per day of bombardment.[411]

Instead a scheme of war damage compensation was proposed that would ensure that property owners did not end a war with less than they started it with in terms of the value of property or possessions. Lord Uthwatt had also reported to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1939 and early 1940 on the assessment of war damage and compensation, and the 1939 value was later adopted as the ceiling price for war damage compensation as well as land acquisition.[412] The 1939 value was therefore already well established as the likely basis for compensation by the time the Uthwatt Committee made its interim report in 1941, and had additional support from Reith who had also recommended the use of the 1939 value in May 1941.[413] The adoption of the 1939 value was designed to prevent wartime land and property speculation but later became a source of resentment amongst blitzed traders and property owners. These proposals eventually became the War Damage Acts 1941 and 1943, which formed the basis of finance for reconstruction.

It is evident that the activity within central government regarding new legislation was not apparent to local authorities or trade organisations, as there was growing

[411] TNA, CAB 24-269-19, Committee of Imperial Defence, *Insurance against aircraft and bombardment risks,* 15 April 1937.
[412] War Damage Commission notes, National Archives Catalogue - http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C1035 (accessed on 23/3/2017); TNA, CAB 67/8/51, Kingsley Wood, 'Compensation for War Damage to Property', 1 October 1940.
[413] J.B Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning 1939-1945 Vol.1: Reconstruction and Land Use Planning* (London: HMSO, 1975), pp.63-64.

discontent and impatience with the perceived lack of action. The problems which the ongoing lack of legislation created were clearly demonstrated by Bristol's attitude to replanning. The city felt that without any indication of the powers which would be available to local authorities or financial aid, any plan it produced would be flawed.[414] This fear was replicated in other cities, particularly in terms of the financial aid which might be available to blitzed cities, but Bristol was the most reluctant to plan without new legislation.[415] The decision to present a draft plan to the city was the product of this reluctance, as it allowed the Council room for manoeuvre once the planning legislation was in place.

Although Bristol was one of only a few local authorities which actively resisted planning in-depth until the state of the legislative landscape was clear, the majority of blitzed cities grew increasingly restless and began to demand action from government from the end of 1942. A key figure in this agitation was Viscount Waldorf Astor, Lord Mayor of Plymouth. Astor worked with the leaders of other blitzed cities and the Association of Municipal Corporations, which represented the interests of local authorities, to put their concerns to government and led a press campaign for action on legislation. Although Astor was the most prominent of those who agitated for action from central government, there is evidence that others undertook similar action, such as Henry Michelmore, an Exeter solicitor, who put forward proposals for a planning bill and methods for calculating compensation.[416]

Waldorf Astor was well connected in both the political and media worlds, giving him a unique position for a city mayor and an ideal campaigning platform. Astor had sat

[414] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.72; *Western Daily Press,* 'Re-Planning of Bristol' 8 May 1941.
[415] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp.14-15.
[416] TNA, 71/590 Letter from H.Michelmore to Lord Portal re reconstruction finance and legislation, 4 December 1942.

in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, representing the Plymouth Sutton constituency between 1910 and 1919, when the death of his father led to Waldorf resigning his Commons seat to take his place in the House of Lords. Astor was a Conservative, but was well known as a reformer, supporting the 1911 National Insurance Act and agricultural and housing reform. His interest in the latter led Astor to sponsor the building of a model housing development at Mount Gould in Plymouth in the late 1920s. Astor acted as advisor to Lloyd George and was well acquainted with many of the political elite of the interwar years, including Churchill, Chamberlain and Eden. In addition to this, Astor's wife, Lady Nancy Astor, became the MP for Plymouth's Sutton constituency after Waldorf stood down in 1919 and was consistently returned to the seat until 1945.

The Astors' were therefore a respected political force in the city, adding weight and credibility to Waldorf Astor's campaign. In addition, Astor had influence and connections in the media world, as in 1911 his father had bought the *Observer* newspaper from Lord Northcliffe on his behalf.[417] These political and media connections become apparent in Astor's campaign for reconstruction legislation and financial aid for blitzed cities.

Astor was evidently in correspondence with Reith with regard to planning matters by September 1941, although at this stage it seems that Astor was merely looking for guidance on the subject. Astor's correspondence with both Reith and George Pepler (then town planning advisor to the Minister of Health) in 1941 demonstrated a keen interest in planning matters and securing the best advice and guidance on

[417] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Waldorf Astor, 2nd Viscount .

reconstruction for Plymouth.[418] His correspondence with both Abercrombie and Paton Watson corroborates this.

By March 1942, however, the tone of Astor's correspondence with the Ministry of Works and Planning, now with Sir William Jowitt as Minister, had changed from requests for guidance to calls for the swift passing of new legislation. Astor highlighted the problems that the delays to legislation were causing for blitzed cities, citing in particular the potential problems of interim development and site speculation and their effect on replanning and physical reconstruction.[419] Correspondence between Paton Watson and Astor on the subjects of interim development and site speculation from the same month demonstrates that Astor was reacting to concerns raised by the City Engineer.[420] The same concerns were later raised with Lord Portal, then Minister of Supply, in April 1942, again with pleas for the swift passing of legislation to prevent speculation and allow for proper replanning.[421] Astor's personal acquaintance with many of the individuals within the various ministries gave him far more influence than other municipal representatives, something which he later used to represent the views of local authorities to ministers.

In 1943 Astor drew together a group of blitzed cities with the aim of collectively lobbying central government for new planning legislation.[422] Astor wrote to the

[418] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to Reith re regional planning, 24 September 1941; Letter from Astor to Pepler re planning consultant, 12 August 1941; Letter from Astor to Pepler re regional planning, 24 September 1941.
[419] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to Jowitt re legislation and blitzed cities, 19 March 1942.
[420] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Paton Watson to Astor re site speculation and legislation, 17 March 1942.
[421] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to Portal re legislation and site speculation, 24 April 1942.
[422] See PWDRO,1495/41 Tabulated Replies: Lord Mayors and Mayors blitzed cities replanning 1943-1944.

Mayors of the other eighteen blitzed cities to suggest co-ordinated action to press for the required legislation and received positive replies from all but Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. A co-signed letter to the *Times* to request that the government push through the necessary planning legislation as quickly as possible was suggested, as well as a deputation to government.[423]

At the same time, Astor was also working closely with the Association of Municipal Corporations to co-ordinate their actions with Astor's group of blitzed cities. As such, the planned deputation was to be a co-ordinated effort with the AMC to ensure that the local authority view was forcefully heard. Astor himself wrote letters to the *Times* prior to the joint letter with other blitzed cities in order to raise the profile of the blitzed cities' plight.

The joint letter was published on 21 October 1943 and was signed by fourteen of the nineteen blitzed cities.[424] Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham maintained their position on co-ordinated action, feeling that it was either unnecessary or premature. The head of London County Council, Lord Charles Latham, was sympathetic and supportive of Astor's stance, but felt unable to lend his signature to the letter. He felt that Astor's suggestions for legislative reform were too piecemeal and ran against his own public proclamations on the subject.[425] Despite this, Latham wrote to the *Times* to lend his support to Astor's campaign, stressing the urgent need for fresh legislation to allow the blitzed cities to progress with planning.[426] The Welsh cities of

[423] PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies: Lord Mayors and Mayors blitzed cities – replanning: Letter from Astor to city mayors re legislation, 14 August 1943.
[424] PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies: Lord Mayors and Mayors blitzed cities – replanning: Copy of joint letter to the *Times,* 19 October 1943; *Times* Letters to the Editor 'Housing Delays', 21 October 1943.
[425] PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies: Lord Mayors and Mayors blitzed cities - replanning: Letter from Lord Lathem, LCC, to Astor re letter to the *Times,* 10 September 1943.
[426] *Times,* Letters to the Editor 'Land for Public Use', 22 October 1943.

Swansea and Cardiff are also missing, although it is unclear why they did not sign the *Times* letter.

Astor evidently used his influence in both political and media circles to ensure that the voices of the blitzed cities were heard. The head of the AMC, Harry Pritchard, wrote to Astor at the beginning of October 1943 to say that he was prepared to write to the press himself, but 'they do not take much notice of me and a communication from you is likely to be helpful'.[427] In addition to his personal letters to the *Times*, Astor also wrote pieces for the local press, including the regional *Western Morning News*.[428]

Correspondence with his editor at the *Observer* suggests that Astor was also instrumental in the publication of reconstruction pieces in the paper.[429] More interestingly, Astor also asked his *Observer* staff if they might be able to persuade 'the Daily Herald...or any of the left-wing papers to agitate' as 'It is ridiculous that it should be left to the right-wing Tories to try and tackle the land question'.[430] Astor's general correspondence on the reconstruction question demonstrates that he considered it too important an issue for it to get caught up in political divisions between left and right.

[427] PWDRO, 1495/43 Lord Mayors Secretary: Reconstruction August 1943-January 1944, Plymouth Replanning and reconstruction, Letter from Pritchard to Astor re compulsory acquisition of land, 5 October 1943.
[428] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter to the *Times,* 29 June 1943.
[429] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to Ivor Brown of the *Observer* re reconstruction legislation, 30 June 1943; 1495/43 Lord Mayors Secretary: Reconstruction August 1943- January 1944, Plymouth replanning and reconstruction, Letter from Astor to Ivor Brown of the *Observer* re legislation, 29 November 1943; *Observer,* 'Notes of the week; Another case for action', 18 July 1943.
[430] PWDRO, 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to John Beavan of the *Observer* re left-wing press, 29 June 1943.

Astor wrote to MPs and councillors on both sides of the political divide to seek support and advice on the reconstruction question. Most notably in June 1943 he wrote to Arthur Greenwood, then leader of the Labour Party, to urge Labour support for the required reconstruction legislation. Astor enclosed a copy of his letter to the *Times* and urged Greenwood not to 'leave it to the old reactionary Tories like myself to advocate public ownership of the land!'[431] Astor also encouraged the Mayors of the other blitzed cities to involve their local press and MPs in the campaign as well, especially as he felt the latter were not doing enough to underline the plight of blitzed cities and the urgent need for planning legislation.[432] It is notable that the MPs for Bristol and Exeter were almost silent on the matter of blitzed city reconstruction in parliament, leaving it to Nancy Astor and Leslie Hore-Belisha (MP for Devonport) to raise the issue in debate.[433] It is also evident that Astor used his political connections to secure meetings between key ministerial figures and representatives of both the blitzed cities and the AMC, as there is correspondence between Astor, Pepler and William Morrison (Minister of Town and Country Planning from 1943) discussing the deputations and potential dates for meeting.[434]

Astor's feeling that reconstruction was too important to be divided by political affiliation was echoed by the councils of the three South Western cities and by the blitzed cities more generally. The early support for replanning and reconstruction

[431] PWDRO, Lord Mayors Office: Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Astor to Greenwood re legislation support, 23 June 1943.
[432] PWDRO, 1495/43 Lord Mayors Secretary: Reconstruction August 1943- January 1944, Plymouth replanning and reconstruction, Letter from Astor to blitzed city mayors re local press and MP's, 29 November 1943.
[433] See Hansard archive – for example HC debate, 'Clause 45 (Assessment of compensation in connection with acquisition of land for public purposes by reference to 1939 prices), Vol.403, cc.1369-400, 6 October 1944.
[434] For examples, see PWDRO, 1495/43 Lord Mayors Secretary: Reconstruction August 1943-January 1944, Plymouth replanning and reconstruction, Letter from Astor to Morrison re meeting with PCC and legislation, 8 July 1943; 1495/40 Lord Mayors Office – Reconstruction Correspondence, Letter from Pepler to Astor re visit of advisory panel to Plymouth

was surprisingly cohesive across party lines within the local authorities, with the general feeling being that reconstruction needed to be handled carefully and with an eye to the future.[435] Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth were predominantly Conservative prior to 1945 with Conservative-led councils, but despite some concerns about the potential cost of reconstruction, the general consensus was that replanning was necessary and desirable. This is reflected in the correspondence between Astor and the Mayors of Bristol and Exeter, who echo Astor's anxiety over the slow progress of legislation.[436]

Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, which all declined to sign Astor's letter to the *Times,* do not appear to have been politically motivated in their reluctance to join Astor's campaign, but instead were motivated by the planning needs of each city. Birmingham, a predominantly Conservative city prior to 1945, had a long history of extensive civic remodelling and as such had a staff experienced in dealing with central government on planning matters. The City Engineer, Herbert Manzoni, sat on many of the wartime government's reconstruction committees as an advisor and therefore had direct access to the relevant ministers to press for legislative change.[437] Manchester was a predominantly Labour city, but the City Council declined to support Astor's campaign as they felt the legislative changes proposed by Astor would not serve Manchester's post-war needs. [438] The Council also stated that such matters were best left to organisations such as the

[435] *Western Daily Press,* 'Council Approves New City Plan', 18 July 1945; *Western Morning News,* 'Council Approves Plan of New Plymouth' 5 September 1944.
[436] PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies: Lord Mayors and Mayors blitzed cities – replanning, Letter from Exeter Mayor to Astor re Times Letter, 1 September 1943; Letter from Exeter Mayor re legislation pressure, 8 October 1943; Letter from Bristol Mayor to Astor re legislation, 17 August 1943; Letter from Bristol Mayor re legislation pressure, 6 September 1943.
[437] TNA, HLG 88/14, 'Report of the Advisory Panel on Redevelopment of City Centres', 2 August 1943; TNA HLG 88/8, Reconstruction of City Centres: Notes on personnel for Committee, 4 February 1943.
[438] PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies – Lord Mayors and Mayors Blitzed Cities, Letter from M Hill, Mayor of Manchester, to Astor re Times Letter, 16 September 1943.

AMC, who they felt had more influence than individual councils as they represented local authorities as a whole.[439]

However, the correspondence between Astor and the Secretary of the AMC, Harry Pritchard, suggests that the AMC found Astor's influence and involvement useful in getting their voice heard within the relevant ministries. Astor's personal acquaintance with the Minister of Town and Country Planning, William Morrison, was advantageous to the AMC as it helped to secure a meeting with the Ministry regarding legislation. Astor wrote personally to Morrison ahead of the AMC sending their request for a meeting to help smooth the path.[440] Astor also represented the AMC at the eventual meeting, along with Lord Latham of the London County Council and Sir Miles Mitchell.[441] They were supported by council members from the affected cities, including Exeter.

The correspondence between the other blitzed cities and Astor further demonstrates the lack of political division or ideology in reconstruction planning at the local level. The remaining blitzed cities wrote to support Astor's campaign, stressing the importance of a legislative framework to allow their plans to be brought to fruition.[442] The cities were of mixed political backgrounds, but the majority were Conservative-led prior to 1945. Without conducting a full-scale investigation into the local tensions at Council level, it is not possible to fully explore this aspect of reconstruction here, but a general overview of the blitzed cities suggests that prior to the passing of the

[439] PWDRO, 1495/41, Letter from M Hill to Astor re AMC and Times Letter, 7 October 1943.
[440] PWDRO, 1495/42 Notes for AMC Deputation, Letter from Astor to Morrison re deputation regarding compulsory purchase, 29 September 1943.
[441] PWDRO, 1495/42 Notes for AMC Deputation, 'Association of Municipal Corporations: Acquisition of Land – Notes of a deputation form the AMC and the LCC and Members of Parliament' 1 December 1943, p.1.
[442] See correspondence in PWDRO, 1495/41 Tabulated Replies – Lord Mayors and Mayors Blitzed Cities.

1944 Act, blitzed cities were generally united across party lines for the need for comprehensive reconstruction plans.

This cross-party attitude toward reconstruction challenges another accepted reconstruction narrative, that radical reconstruction plans were the product of Labour councils, while the more modest plans were produced by Conservative councils. This is partly due to the work of Nick Tiratsoo on Coventry, a city which produced one of the most radical and applauded plans for post-war reconstruction under the leadership of a Labour council.[443] The city retained a Labour-led council throughout the post-war period, cementing the idea of radical reconstruction plans being synonymous with Labour leadership. However, Plymouth's plan has been acknowledged as being just as radical, yet this was produced under a Conservative-led council. Likewise, the plans for Bristol and Exeter were also produced under Conservative leadership.

This aspect of reconstruction planning has been overlooked, as the majority of reconstruction plans were produced under pre-war local leadership, which was often Conservative. The initial plans for Hull, Portsmouth and Southampton were created under such Conservative administrations, with Portsmouth remaining Conservative post-1945.[444] This coupled with the continuity of planning aims from the interwar period, such as the planning of new roads fit for modern transport, demonstrates that reconstruction plans were not the product of a particular political ideology, but of circumstance and necessity. City councils did see the war damage

[443] Tiratsoo, *Affluence, Reconstruction and Labour Politics: Coventry 1945-60* (London: Routledge, 1990)
[444] Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940s', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1, 2000, pp.57-59; Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.20, 47-50; Tiratsoo, 'Labour and the Reconstruction of Hull 1945-1951' in Tiratsoo (ed.) *The Attlee Years* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), p.126

as an opportunity to tackle their urban problems, and produced a surprising level of consensus across the political landscape on this issue. It is notable that the major concern across all three South Western councils was the swift reinstatement of traders, but on a new city plan which would benefit the whole city and its citizens.[445] Beyond city centre reconstruction, the provision of housing was the foremost concern, with little of the wrangling over housing types and provision for the poorest which was sometimes found in interwar schemes. This picture began to change after 1945, but the economic constraints placed on reconstruction account for far more of the changes to reconstruction plans than political ideology. The lack of political division in campaigning for new legislation to facilitate reconstruction plans further reinforces this point.

Astor's campaign for a speedy legislative answer to the plight of blitzed cities and the work of the blitzed cities themselves in this respect also helps to negate the idea that local authorities prevaricated over reconstruction. This idea is most frequently found in the local histories of blitzed cities, such as Todd Gray's *Exeter in the 1940s,* but can also be found in the wider reconstruction literature.[446] The long delay between destruction and reconstruction is attributed to disorganisation on the part of local authorities and a reluctance to assist blitzed traders for their own ends. The traders in Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all requested to rebuild immediately or, failing this, to be allowed to erect temporary premises. The requests were taken seriously by the City Councils, who applied on behalf of blitzed traders to the Board of Trade for permission to build. In all instances permission was denied as, understandably, it

[445] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2 – Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter on Monday 9th July 1946, p.45; *Western Daily Press,* 'Satisfy Most -If Not All – Interests', 17 July 1944; *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Unity Over Plan', 5 December 1944.
[446] Todd Gray, *Exeter in the 1940s,* p.129-130.

was felt that rebuilding during the war would be unwise as there was no guarantee the air war was over.[447] Temporary buildings were also restricted under 1941 government building regulations, which required a licence for all building work over a value of £100 in order to direct all possible resources to the war effort.[448] As such, councils, and therefore traders, were refused permission to build. Blitzed cities were instead encouraged to begin reconstruction plans, with the promise that legislation and finance would be forthcoming for such rebuilding. By the time of Astor's campaign, blitzed cities had been waiting for two and a half years for such legislation and were getting increasingly impatient. Astor's campaign brought blitzed cities together to apply pressure to government as a group, while individual councils continued their own efforts to speed the process.

In addition to the work done by figures such as Astor and the councils of blitzed cities, some individuals also tried to use their own knowledge and connections to influence and hasten planning legislation. The Exeter solicitor, and former city Mayor, Henry Michelmore is one such example, with his correspondence with the Ministry of Works and Planning (later Town and Country Planning) demonstrating that, despite appearances, the Ministry did take into consideration the ideas presented by such outside bodies. Michelmore was acquainted with Sir Spencer Portal, uncle of Lord Wyndam Portal who was Minister of Works and Planning between 1942 and 1943. Through Spencer Portal, Michelmore wrote to the Minister with a series of proposals for new planning legislation to deal with the problem of

[447] *Express & Echo,* 'Fifty Temporary Shops', 18 July 1942; *Western Morning News,* 'Great Shopping Centre' 16 July 1942; Letter from Waterhouse re temp shops, 1942; *Western Daily Press,* 'Temporary Shop Premises in Castle Street', 3 April 1941; 'Replanning of Bristol', 8 May 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'No Bungalow Shops', 24 April 1941.
[448] *Western Daily Press,* 'Temporary Shop Premises in Castle Street', 3 April 1941.

blitzed cities.[449] Michelmore's proposals generated some interest within the Ministry and were thoroughly discussed and considered, as was a suggested draft bill which Michelmore later supplied to the Ministry.[450] Some of Michelmore's suggestions, such as the valuation of blitzed property against the 1910 land tax valuations, were swiftly dismissed as impractical, but others, such as the suggestion of acquired land being held on a fee farm rent rather than a lease, were debated for some time.[451]

Michelmore was evidently aware of the Uthwatt report and supported the idea of all blitzed land being vested in the local authority to make reconstruction a simple process.[452] He therefore offers us a further insight into the political narrative of reconstruction as Michelmore represented the traditional professional class in provincial England.

Michelmore was a solicitor, public school educated with connections in the upper-middle classes and had served Exeter as city Mayor on two occasions.[453] As such he represented what could be considered the traditional Conservative element of society, and yet Michelmore supported the idea of comprehensive reconstruction and the public ownership of blitzed land. His suggestion of the land being held on a fee farm rent basis could be considered to demonstrate the Conservative, property-owning element of this class, as such a basis gave the occupier rights similar to

[449] TNA, HLG71/590, Letter from Michelmore to Spencer Portal re proposals to Lord W Portal, 3 December 1942; Letter from Michelmore to Lord Portal (Minister of Works and Planning) re reconstruction legislation, 4 December 1942.
[450] TNA, HLG71/590, Memorandum from Schaffer to Hill re Michelmore's proposals, 1 January 1943; Memorandum from Hill to Parliamentary Secretary re Michelmore's proposals, 4 January 1943; Memorandum from Schaffer to Hill re Michelmore's draft bill, 9 September 1943
[451] TNA, HLG71/590, Letter from Michelmore to Lord Portal (Minister of Works and Planning) re reconstruction legislation, 4 December 1942; Notes on Michelmore's Bill, January 1943; Memorandum from Schaffer to Hill re Michelmore's proposals, 1 January 1943; Memorandum from Schaffer to to Hill re Michelmore's bill, 9 September 1943
[452] TNA, HLG7/590, Letter from Michelmore to Spencer Portal re proposals to Lord W Portal, 3 December 1942.
[453] DHC, Westcountry Studies Collection, Newspaper cuttings (loose) - B/Exeter: Mayors and Sherriffs, 1949/1950. Cuttings taken from the *Express and Echo,* 6 April 1949.

freeholders but without outright ownership of the land. However, Michelmore suggested this as a way of avoiding the uncertainty that he felt leasehold occupation gave, particularly in the last years of a lease.[454] Michelmore's correspondence therefore gives further evidence that reconstruction did not divide neatly along tradition political or class lines.

The consideration that the Ministry gave to Michelmore's proposals is surprising in its thoroughness, with both the initial suggestions and the draft bill investigated paragraph by paragraph for feasibility and practicality.[455] This suggests that the Ministry were prepared to consider outside opinions from individuals who could be considered knowledgeable on land and planning matters in order to deal with the difficult issue of legislation. This again demonstrates that reconstruction planning was not a top-down process as has been suggested, but was open to ideas and input from groups outside the planning profession and government.

Impact of the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act

The long-awaited Town and Country Planning Act was passed in November 1944 and gave blitzed cities a planning framework for implementing their plans, but the Act caused controversy owing to the lack of financial provisions for reconstruction within it. [456] The Act provided no finance for physical rebuilding beyond the existing war damage compensation scheme, provided by the War Damage Acts, and also contained clauses which would effectively change land tenure from a freehold to

[454] TNA, HLG71/590, Letter from Henry Michelmore to Lord Portal re reconstruction legislation, 4 December 1942.
[455] TNA, HLG71/590; Memo from Henry Shaffer to Mr Hill re Michelmore's proposals, c. December 1942; Draft notes re Michelmore's draft bill, c. December 1942; Memo from Mr Hill re Michelmore's draft bill, 1 January 1943.
[456] Hansard, HC Debate 17 November 1944, vol.404, c2319.

leasehold basis where plans were undertaken. It was this latter clause which drove much of the discontent and opposition to replanning.

The idea of local authorities acquiring all of the blitzed land in order to replan effectively had been supported by traders and property owners from 1941, as it was recognised as a practical way of dealing with a complex matter.[457] Blitzed land could be replanned and new sites allocated to blitzed traders suitable for their expected post-war needs. However, this support rested on the expectation that the land would be sold back to the original owners at the end of the process, so that they would again have the freehold. The 1944 Act prohibited the sale of land back to the original owners, therefore only allowing leasehold tenure in replanned city centres.[458] The second principle was that of mobile compensation payments. It had been widely anticipated that one of the types of compensation payment available, the Cost of Works payment, would be made 'mobile', i.e. that it could be claimed if an owner was required to move to a new site under a reconstruction scheme.[459] The 1944 act did not allow for this, reducing the already restricted finance options for reconstruction even further. The financial basis for reconstruction and the change of land tenure created by 1944 Town and Country Planning Act led to the backlash against planning seen from 1944 onwards. Land ownership and reconstruction finance became the defining factors in rebuilding the blitzed cities, as these factors eventually dictated who rebuilt the city centres and how plans were executed.

[457] *Western Daily Press,* 'Re-Planning of Bristol', 8 May 1941; *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning of Plymouth', 14 July 1943.
[458] 1944 Town & Country Planning Act (London: HMSO, 1944), clause 19.
[459] TNA, IR34/1344 'Portable Cost of Works Payments: Deputation from Association of Municipal Corporations in Latter Half of September 1945 – Notes for the Minister', 13 September 1945.

However, the importance of both the legislative and financial aspects of reconstruction have not been fully explored current reconstruction literature. The problems with finance for reconstruction have been alluded to by many researchers, including the influential Tiratsoo, Hasegawa and Larkham, but mostly in terms of the impact on rateable value in cities and the impact of this on reconstruction styles.[460] The choice of architecture and materials is frequently attributed to the problems of post-war finance, as seen in Tait and While's work on Exeter, but the mechanisms of compensation and finance for rebuilding have not been fully unpacked.[461] The exceptions to this are Hasegawa's work on the decline of radical planning, and the work of Catherine Flinn.[462] Flinn fully acknowledges the financial constraints placed on blitzed cities and their impact, and in particular noted how the decision not to provide public funding for blitzed city reconstruction led to the emergence of development companies and the involvement of insurance companies in reconstruction work.[463] The role of development and finance companies will be more fully explored in the following chapters.

The restrictions on war damage compensation payments had been recognised as a potential problem while the legislation was being drafted, particularly as the compensation available under the War Damage Acts was deliberately quite

[460] Peter J Larkham, 'People, Planning and Place: The roles of client and consultant in reconstructing post-war Bilston and Dudley', *Town Planning Review,* 77/5 (2006), pp.557-558; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp.38, 78-79.; Hasegawa, *Rebuilding the Blitzed City Centre,* pp.115-116.
[461] Malcom Tait and Aiden While, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* Vol.24/1 (2009), p.90.
[462] Junichi Hasegawa, 'The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction in 1940s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History,* 10/2 (1999), pp.151-55.
[463] Catherine Flinn, 'City of Our Dreams: The political and economic realities of rebuilding Britain's blitzed cities', *Twentieth Century British History,* 23/2, 2012, pp.221-245; 'Overlooked Constraints: The Reconstruction of blitzed city centres in Britain 1945-1955 (MA thesis: 2007)'.

minimal.[464] The whole intention of the scheme was that any property owner would not gain or lose from war damage, but would have the same value of property as they had in 1939.

The scheme was never intended to insure property in the traditional sense, being intended to compensate the owner for loss of value or the cost of repairs, not for a replacement building at current prices.[465] The system was designed to ensure that property owners ended the war with the same value in property as they started it with. Compensation values were therefore based on the value of property at 31 March 1939 to negate any potential increase or loss of land and property value due to the war. The calculation for compensation worked thus: The total amount that could be claimed was the value of the building and site in March 1939 minus the value of the site if it was sold in its damaged state. The difference between the two values made the maximum amount that could be claimed. When this was sum was added to the site value, the owner would have the same total amount of value as in March 1939. This was known as the Value Payment.

Claims for repairs could be made up to the amount of the Value Payment, with some adjustment for the rises in the price of materials and labour (a figure was eventually settled on of up to 66.75% of the Value Payment in 1942); this was a Cost of Works payment.[466] If the building was considered a total loss – i.e the cost of

[464] TNA, HLG 88/10, 'Degree to Which War Damage Payments Will Contribute to Financing Development', 21 November 1943.
[465] TNA, IR 34/1115, Suggestion that Value Payment Should be Assimilated to Cost of Works, Letter from W. Boulton MP re Sheffield Chamber of Commerce memo on war damage compensation, June 1943; IR 34/1115, 'War Damage Commission: Factors Governing the Class of Payment Under the War Damage Act', 22 December 1941; HLG 88/10, 'Degree to which War Damage Payments will contribute to financing redevelopment', 31 May 1943.
[466] TNA, IR34/15, 'War Damage Compensation: Factors Governing the Class of Payment Under the War Damage Act', 22 November 1941; HLG 88/10, 'Degree to Which War Damage Payments Will Contribute to Financing Development', 21 November 1943.

repair would be more than the Value Payment – then owners could only claim the Value Payment.

The Cost of Works payment also had certain conditions attached to it: the building had to be put back to its exact 1939 state, it had to be on the same site and it could not be redesigned as a new building.[467] There was a small amount of leeway with these stipulations, but if any major changes were proposed then the owner would forfeit their Cost of Works payment for a Value payment. Owners were allowed to make minor adjustments and improvements to their buildings if they were repairing them, but only if repairing the building to its 1939 state would require building back in obsolescence or deterioration.[468] Some allowance was made for shifting a building to allow for town planning - for example if a building needed to be moved backwards in order to widen a road - but the War Damage Act did not allow for Cost of Works payments to be 'mobile', i.e. for the payment to be made if the property had to move from its original site. [469] The clause was inserted to prevent property owners from rebuilding their premises on a more valuable site and therefore profiting from the war.[470] However, as the replanning of city centres got underway, it became obvious that many owners would have to move due to changes in city centre layouts.

[467] TNA, IR 34/15, War Damage Commission Draft Departmental Order No. 2/42 *Preliminary Classification of Claims for Type of Payment (Section 4(1)(a))*, January 1942; TNA IR34/15, *Factors governing the class of payment under the War Damage Act,* n.d (c.1942).
[468] TNA, IR 34/15, War Damage Commission Draft Departmental Order No. 2/42 *Preliminary Classification of Claims for Type of Payment (Section 4(1)(a))*, January 1942; TNA IR34/15, *Factors governing the class of payment under the War Damage Act,* n.d (c.1942)
[469] TNA, HLG 88/10, Advisory Panel on the Redevelopment of City Centres, *Degree to which war damage payments will contribute to financing redevelopment of city centres*, 11 May 1943 p.2.
[470] TNA, HLG 88/10 Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Finance*, The Degree to which War Damage payments will contribute toward financing the redevelopment of city centres*, 31 May 1943, p.1.

It was recognised by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning's Advisory Panel on the Redevelopment of City Centres that the compensation stipulations regarding sites would be problematic for replanning. The Advisory Panel recommended in 1944 that in such circumstances the Cost of Works payment should be made mobile.[471] When an owner had to move sites due to replanning, their eligibility for Cost of Works would follow them to the new site, as they had not chosen to move and were not therefore trying to profit from building on a potentially more valuable site. In these situations Cost of Works could also be applied to a new building, as it was not the choice of the owner to build anew, but the requirement of the plan. The Advisory Panel evidently expected that this would be written into any new legislation relating to town planning and physical reconstruction as mobile payments are repeatedly referred to in the memoranda and reports produced by them.[472]

Additionally, many of the surviving documents indicate that a Cost of Works payment could be applied even when a building had been totally destroyed.[473] Presumably an owner would still be eligible if the cost of rebuilding was less than the Value Payment amount, as in this case the building would not be classified as a total loss. This is certainly what many of the blitzed traders in the South Western cities expected and it is certainly the interpretation of the Act to be found amongst the Advisory Panel's records. It is evident from the correspondence between traders, local authorities and

[471] TNA, HLG 88/15, Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Reports and Comments 1944-1945, 'Report of the Advisory Panel on the redevelopment of city centres', 2 August 1944, p.9. This advice was omitted from the final version of the report circulated to Ministers and local authorities as the 1944 Act had been passed and the advice contradicted the Act – see letter from Methven to Whiskard in same file, 14 November 1944.
[472] TNA, HLG 88/14, Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Comments on Report, 'Report of the Advisory Panel on the redevelopment of city centres', 2 February 1943, p.9; HLG 88/9, Ministry of Town and Country Planning Advisory Panel on the Redevelopment of City Centres, Minute No.15, 26 January 1944, para 12, p.4.
[473] TNA, HLG 88/10 Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Finance, 'The Degree to which War Damage payments will contribute toward financing the redevelopment of city centres', p.2.

the Ministries involved that property owners viewed the Cost of Works payment as more valuable and useful than the Value Payment, and were therefore angry and disappointed when the legislation made no concession to site changes enforced by replanning.[474]

Although both the Advisory Panel and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning expected Cost of Works to become mobile, this was not the expectation of the Treasury. It is clear that from their point of view the War Damage Act was not intended to finance physical reconstruction in its entirety. The compensation was intended to cover repairs and ensure that no property owner actually lost money through war damage, but it was well understood that the amounts available might not cover the reinstatement of destroyed buildings.[475]

Correspondence between the members of the Advisory Panel regarding the final wording of their report reveals that the Panel came under pressure from the Treasury to remove mention of mobile Cost of Works payments.[476] The report was due to be released after the 1944 Act was passed and would have contradicted the Act's stipulation that the payments could not be made mobile. Members of the panel were concerned that the complete omission of their recommendation would give the impression that they had not fully considered the financial implications of reconstruction, while the Treasury did not want any suggestion that the terms of the

[474] *Western Morning News,* 'War Damage and Payment', 3 December 1943; 'Plymouth Inquiry Plea for Bombed Out', 2 May 1946; *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Traders Want More Compensation', 8 May 1946;
[475] TNA, HLG 71/928 Planning: Financial Assistance for Reconstruction, 'Extract from file no. 95207/5 Memo from Mr Hill to Mr Vincent re Local authorities and the exchequer*',* 26 July 1941.
[476] TNA, HLG 88/15 Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Reports and Committees 1944-15, Letter from Manzoni to Neal re report, 9 November 1944; Letter from Methven to Whiskard re report, 14 November 1944; Letter from Neal to Chambers re report, 28 November 1944.

payments could be changed.[477] This demonstrates very clearly that the decisions regarding finance were driven by the Treasury, who viewed the question of finance very differently to the Ministry, the Panel and the blitzed cities themselves.

The Treasury presumed that the potential financial gap between the available compensation and the cost of rebuilding would be borne by property owners themselves. The Treasury also viewed the value of property differently to either owners or the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. The land and its associated rent and rateable value were considered the greatest part of property value, with the building being only a small part of the property value. The land value would remain intact, including potential rent and rate values because even if the building was a total loss, the site would still be desirable for future businesses. The Treasury assumed that if replanning forced an owner to move sites, their site value would remain intact, as the removal of retail or business districts would also move site values to the new location. The Treasury felt that in this sense an owner would retain the greater part of the value of their property, and therefore the compensation for the bricks and mortar was a minimal feature of the value.[478]

The Treasury also saw reconstruction as a potential outlet for the worrying level of liquidity they foresaw in the post-war economy, with war savings and tax credits building up large amounts of capital for individuals, particularly business and property owners.[479] The investment of these liquid assets into new buildings would help solve the potential problem of inflation caused by the scarcity of consumer

[477] TNA, HLG 88/15 Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Reports and Committees 1944-15, Letter from Neal to Chambers re report, 28 November 1944.
[478] TNA, HLG 88/10, Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Finance 'Degree to Which War Damage Payments Will Contribute to Financing Development', 21 November 1943.
[479] TNA, HLG 88/10, , *Degree to which war damage payments will contribute to the redevelopment of city centres*, 31 May 1943, pp.6-7; *Memorandum prepared by the Treasury on the post-war relation between purchasing power and consumer goods,* 30 June 1942, pp.22-23.

goods. With consumer goods severely restricted through rationing, inflation was a major challenge facing the economy post-war as the public had accumulated savings at a greater rate than in peacetime. Some of these savings had been absorbed through government investment drives, such as war bonds, but there were still very high levels of savings being held by individuals. If the restrictions on consumer spending were lifted too quickly, inflation would follow as individuals tried to buy scarce goods, forcing the prices up in the process.[480] It was already agreed by 1942 that rationing and restrictions on consumer spending should remain in place for the immediate post-war period in order to avert this possibility.[481] Without a consumer outlet for spending, it was hoped that some of these liquid assets would be redirected to capital investment, and that as such property owners would be happy to invest in new buildings.

What the Treasury overlooked was the proposed change to land ownership in city centres, which made their concept of site value flawed. The 1944 Act allowed local authorities to acquire blitzed land in order to replan, but prohibited the sale of blitzed land back to the original owners once replanning had been achieved.[482] This meant that in future all city centre sites would be held on a leasehold basis, not freehold. In future traders would not own their sites and would not therefore have the land value, nor would they benefit from any increases in land values created by reconstruction. They would also be paying ground rent on the sites, which would reduce or negate any potential rental income which might be obtained from sub-letting part or all of the

[480] TNA, CAB 66-27-27, War Cabinet, Official Committee on Internal Economic Problems, *Interim report on internal economic problems of the post-war transitional period,* 30 June 1942, pp.13, 16; *Memorandum prepared by the Treasury on the post-war relation between purchasing power and consumer goods,* 30 June 1942, pp.22-23.
[481] TNA, CAB 66-27-27 War Cabinet, Official Committee on Internal Economic Problems, *Interim report on internal economic problems of the post-war transitional period,* 30 June 1942, p.13.
[482] PWDRO, Town and Country Planning Act 1944, Clause 15, subsection 5.

building. Therefore investing money into new buildings became less attractive for the smaller property owners as they would have lost the greater part of their site value. Added to the decision not to provide any other finance for reconstruction beyond the war damage compensation, many smaller traders and owners felt cheated and aggrieved by the proposals.

The Treasury had reason to be cautious about committing to finance for blitzed city reconstruction. The War Aims Committee had identified other areas of reconstruction and commissioned approximately fifty-two different reports by July 1942, covering demobilisation, social security, trade and economy, housing needs, education, industry, transport and utilities. [483]

There were questions of finance within these investigations, particularly in terms of the demobilisation of industry. It was recognised that many factories would need to retool and reinvest in capital goods post-war, either because their existing machinery would be worn out or because their machines had been geared to war production.[484] Finance would need to be provided for this task, and quickly. There were further reconstruction needs related to industry and the economy, such as transport, energy and agriculture. The transport question was particularly important, as it was recognised that a complete overhaul of existing systems was likely to be needed to ensure the maximum efficiency of the nation. Planning for these sectors included the building of a network of 'motor roads', which became the motorway network, and the complete regeneration of the railways.[485] The latter were already suffering from a lack of investment prior to the outbreak of war, so it was expected

[483] TNA, CAB 66/27/27, *Reconstruction Problems: Report by the Paymaster General,* 1 August 1942, pp.4-5.
[484] TNA; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, pp.22-23.
[485] TNA, CAB 66/27/27, *Reconstruction Problems: Report by the Paymaster General,* 1 August 1942, pp.4-5.

that the railways would require major investment post-war.[486] If industry were to recover and make progress over its interwar output, a better electricity supply network would also be needed. Prior to the outbreak of war, the electricity network in Britain was still piecemeal, with production and distribution being handled by dozens of small companies and local authorities.[487] It was proposed that electricity production and distribution should be nationalised and brought under the control of regional electricity boards. This would also allow for the systematic expansion of the network so that it would eventually reach all parts of the country.[488] Again, this would require significant government funding. Finally, agriculture would need direction and support to ensure that the nation's food supply remained reliable and plentiful. In particular, it was considered important that food imports should be kept at a minimum post-war in order to keep a favourable balance of payments and to allow for the importing of raw materials needed in industry.[489]

When set against all of these issues, the question of finance for blitzed cities became a minor one and the position of the Treasury with regard to compensation and capital finance becomes more understandable.

The financial provisions of the 1944 Act fuelled discontent and anxiety over rebuilding, which accounts for much of the growing hostility towards reconstruction seen in each city after the release of each plan. This shift of opinion can be most clearly seen in Plymouth, where the tone of comments about the plan began to change in the autumn of 1944, with an increasing number of people voicing concerns at the potential cost of the plan and suggesting alternatives. A number of

[486] W.K Hancock & M.M Gowing, *British War Economy* (London, 1949), pp.480-484.
[487] Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning 1939-1969 Vol.1,* pp.33-36.
[488] Ibid.
[489] TNA, CAB 66/27/27, 'Official Committee on Internal Economic Problems: Interim report on the economic problems of the post-war transitional period',1 August 1942, p.13.

councillors were amongst these voices and a motion was put forward in early December 1944 to create a second, less radical, plan. The Conservative councillor of Mutley Ward, Harry Taylor, motioned for the preparation of an alternative plan based on the existing street pattern 'with improvements such as widening certain throughfares and splaying corners...to make it easier for general traffic and pedestrians'.[490] The motion was seconded by another Conservative councillor, H.G Damerell of the Nelson ward. However, the motion was roundly defeated, with only four members voting in favour of it.[491]

There was evidently some support for the suggestion of a less radical and more economical plan, as correspondence in the *Western Morning News* appeared in the wake of the council meeting supporting Harry Taylor's view. One writer praised the councillor for having an eye on economy and speed in rebuilding rather than the 'extravagant planning and wasteful spending' which he felt the *Plan for Plymouth* exemplified.[492] This was one of a number of similar letters which were received by the paper which supported the idea of a simplified plan and questioned the cost of rebuilding.

Plymouth's traders were also concerned at the lack of funding for reconstruction. It became one of the most discussed points of the Act and Plymouth's traders were unconvinced that a better settlement could be reached. As a result traders expressed increasing concern over the proposals to redesign the city centre streets, which would force them to move sites and thus deprive them of their

[490] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Council Unity Over Plan; Alternative proposals motion decisively defeated', 5 December 1944.
[491] Ibid.
[492] *Western Morning News,* Letters to the Editor 'Plymouth Plan Debate', 8 December 1944.

cost of works payments.[493] Traders and trade groups, such as the Chambers of Commerce, in all three cities had initially been supportive of proposals to put all city centre land under one ownership in order to replan effectively, but this support drained away between 1944 and 1948 with the passing of the 1944 and 1947 Town and Country Planning Acts.[494]

In Exeter, where the *Phoenix* was released after the act had been passed, there was more initial concern expressed amongst Councillors at the cost of rebuilding according to the plan and how this cost would be met than in Bristol or Plymouth.[495] One councillor is recorded as saying that Germany should be made to fund the reconstruction of blitzed cities, which appears to be the only time such a view was recorded in the South Western cities but demonstrates the depth of feeling regarding reconstruction and compensation.[496] It is also noticeable that hostility from blitzed traders to replanning was expressed more quickly than in Plymouth in the wake of its plan.

A similar pattern can be found in other blitzed cities, with the early plans such as those of Coventry following the same model of initial enthusiasm followed by discontent once the 1944 legislation had been passed.[497] . Calls for plans which required traders to leave their original site to be abandoned were seen in many blitzed cities and some, such as Southampton and Hull, did abandon much of their

[493] *Plymouth Herald,* 'City Traders and Problems of Replanning and Transition' 25 January 1945; 'Letters to the Editor: Plymouth Plan', 13 August 1945; *Western Morning News,* 'Small Traders Fears', 9 March 1945, 'Serious Position of Plymouth Trade' 21 September 1945; 'Plymouth Inquiry Plea for Bombed Out', 2 May 1946; ''Little Mans' Voice at Plymouth Enquiry', 3 May 1946;
[494] *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning Plymouth; Business men's proposals', 30 January 1942.
[495] *Western Morning News* 'Praised by Experts', 3 January 1946;*Express & Echo,* 'A Critical Review by Major M.A Sewell', 14 March 1946; Letters to the Editor, 'Can City Bear It?' n.d; Letters to the Editor, 'Impecunious Ratepayer', 23 March 1946.
[496]*Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rent Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948.
[497] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* p.14.

post-war plan as a result.[498] In Plymouth there appears to have been support for the actual replanning scheme, but there was concern that the compensation clauses would drive out the smaller independent traders from the city centre. The financial problems of reconstruction were therefore the subject of the majority of objections to replanning in the city.[499] In Exeter a similar attitude was evident with regard to the smaller trader, but Exeter's traders seem to have taken the lack of financial provisions for rebuilding as a personal insult, with many exclamations about how a city of Exeter's calibre must not be left at the mercy of development companies or multiple traders.[500]

The clause in the 1944 Act which prohibited the sale of land back to the original owners is particularly important, as this entirely changed the basis of reconstruction. Owners and traders had been supportive of the plan to temporarily put city centre land under single ownership in order to simplify replanning, since they would be able to buy back their sites at the end of the process. The Treasury's assessment of the value of a site was essentially right, with owners placing the greatest value on the freehold of a site. Once this was removed, property owners felt they had lost the greatest part of their site value and were reluctant to invest in a site they would not ultimately own. For trader-owners, building on a leasehold site reduced the value of their building significantly, as they were now paying ground rent on the site and would be disadvantaged by increases in the rent and rateable value. This problem became particularly apparent in the public enquiries held into city centre plans, with

[498] Hasegawa, 'The Attitudes of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning towards Blitzed Cities in 1940s Britain', *Planning Perspectives,* 28/2 (2013), pp.274-276.
[499] *Western Morning News,* ''No Figures' Ruling at Plymouth Inquiry', 30 April 1946.
[500] *Western Morning News,* 'Blitzed Traders Call for Better Conditions', 18 December 1948.

financial hardship and the loss of freeholds making up the bulk of objections to the three cities' plans.

Public Inquiries and the Decline of Planning Enthusiasm

The anger of traders and property owners over the provisions of the 1944 Act became very obvious when the plans of each city underwent a public enquiry in 1946. The existing literature sometimes suggests that the public enquiries into each plan were forced by opposition from traders and property owners to the plans and are often used to demonstrate the 'top-down' nature of post-war planning.[501]

However, public enquiries were compulsory in all cases of replanning where it was the intention of the local authority to acquire city centre land via compulsory purchase. The enquiries ensured that all objections and concerns regarding replanning and compulsory purchase were heard and addressed by an outside body.[502] Enquiries also had to be held for each compulsory purchase order used within a city, which meant that some cities, such as Plymouth, actually underwent multiple enquiries. Plymouth City Council used a series of compulsory purchase orders across the late 1940s and 1950s in order to redevelop large parts of the city, and for each one a public enquiry had to be held.[503] Likewise Bristol underwent further public enquiries in 1947 and 1949 for city centre compulsory purchase

[501] Tait & While, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', p.90;
[502] Town and Country Planning Act 1944 (London, 1944); Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning 1939-1947 Vol.1,* p.88.
[503] For examples, see *Plymouth Evening Herald,* 'Ham and West Peverell Estates: Public inquiry into purchase of 106 acres', 9 January 1945; PWDRO, Plymouth Reconstruction: City of Plymouth (City Centre) Compulsory Purchase Order No.2, 1946. Public Local Inquiry, 28 May 1947.

orders, although this was partly due to ongoing disputes with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning.[504]

Blitzed cities also had to produce a Declaratory Area Order, outlining the total area of land they wished to acquire for city centre reconstruction, which was scrutinised by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. It was the enquiries for this overall land requirement and initial compulsory purchase orders which have attracted the most interest from researchers, as they often reveal the tensions and difficulties in rebuilding blitzed cities. Unfortunately, the first three days of Bristol's ten-day enquiry, which covered the controversial Wine Street/Castle Street area, were not deposited with the Bristol Record Office and it has proved difficult to uncover their contents. Likewise, the local copies of the Plymouth enquiry report into Area No.1 are missing from the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, although the enquiry report covering the rest of the central area is available. As a result it has been necessary to piece together the form of the enquiries from local news reports and the remaining documents. These still reveal the local tensions and objections to the plans. Exeter's enquiry report, however, was deposited in its entirety and evidently follows the same form as the other enquiries, giving us a full working document with which to examine the enquiry process.

The enquiries in the three cities were heard between April and July 1946, and were overseen by an Inspector who represented the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. It was the Inspector's job not only to preside over and direct the enquiry, but to compile a report and evidence of the objections for the Ministry. The same

[504] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes: Special Meeting 16th July 1947 minutes 1947; See chapter 4 for discussion of Ministry objections and public enquiries.

Inspector, Mr H.G Warren, oversaw all three of the south-western enquiries and it is also notable that it was generally the same team of Counsels who represented the objectors at each enquiry.[505] It appears that this was deliberate in order to provide continuity between the enquiries and created a pool of knowledge and experience amongst inspector and counsels. As the Inspector was responsible for compiling the enquiry reports, this would also have allowed them to observe the similarities in objections and problems in each city, which in turn could inform the actions of the Ministry.

There are many similarities between the objections and arguments forwarded at each enquiry, with the majority of objections raised in each city connected to land ownership. In addition to this, many objections were raised against the terms of compensation under the Town and Country Planning Act 1944. However, as the terms of compensation and land ownership were ascribed by the legislation, neither the local authorities nor the Ministry had any influence over these matters and the objections had to be disregarded. It was made clear to the objectors that a change in legislation would be required to adjust the terms set out in the 1944 act and this was a matter for government, not a public enquiry.

This undoubtedly fuelled the growing bad feeling between traders, property owners and the local authorities. Traders and property owners were beginning to feel that they were being cheated by the authorities and that replanning was a way to deprive private enterprise of assets under a Socialist agenda.[506] That many local

[505] The Counsels present at all three enquiries were Mr Scott Henderson, Mr Reed and Mr Capewell; BRO, Local Public Enquiry held at the Old Market Hall, Bristol, on the 21 June 1946; PWDRO, Local Public Enquiry held at the Methodist Central Hall, Plymouth, on the 28 May 1947; DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry....Monday 9th July 1946, p.1.
[506] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2 –' Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter on Monday 9th July 1946', p.44-46.

authorities applied to buy very large areas of land under compulsory purchase orders helped to fuel this suspicion, as it seemed that local authorities were trying to acquire more land than traders and property owners felt was necessary for repairing war damaged areas.[507]

This point was raised at all three of the public enquiries, with the Counsels suggesting that the 1944 Act was being misused and misinterpreted by the local authorities in order to fulfil their own agendas. It was argued that the 1944 Act was not a town planning act in the same way that previous ones were, such as the 1932 planning act, and it was instead only designed for dealing with areas of war damage. The cities were therefore considered to be overstepping the powers of the act in trying to acquire large areas of land for replanning, as the land was not all war damaged.[508]

This argument was often forwarded on behalf of property owners who wished to be excluded from the Declaratory Orders in order to retain their freehold, particularly when the property in question was either undamaged or only partially damaged. This point was very vocally made at the Bristol enquiry, where the extremely large Declaratory Order of 771 acres made by the Council was viewed very much as a land-grab.

The financial aspects of reconstruction form another major strand of the enquiries. Although the problem of compensation had to be excluded from the enquiries, it still loomed large over the proceedings. The majority of objectors wished to have their

[507] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,000,000 for centre sites', 13 June 1946.
[508] *Western Daily Press,* 'City Planning Denounced', 22 June 1946; BRO, 38129/3 Central Area Declaratory Order: Public Local Enquiry Proceedings files 4-10, 1946: 'Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry Held at the Central Hall, Old Market Street, Bristol on Monday 17th June 1946', p.27.

property excluded from the Declaratory Orders and CPOs. This reflected the two major financial grievances over reconstruction plans – the loss of freeholds and the problem of the Cost of Works payments. The major objection amongst traders was to the loss of their freeholds under the 1944 Act, which prevented the resale of freeholds back to traders, except under 'exceptional circumstances', with many being reluctant to rebuild on leasehold sites.[509] It was this loss of assets which property owners objected to, and many requested to be 'left out' of the CPO, claiming the retention of their freehold would not affect the overall plan. This particular type of objection is most clearly seen in Exeter where the City Council applied only to buy war damaged areas.

The question of the broader reconstruction costs and how they were to be borne was raised at all three enquiries but was particularly pronounced at Plymouth. Along with the loss of freeholds, the cost to the local authorities of purchasing land and how this would be met was a significant concern.[510] It was understood that local authorities would take loans in order to purchase the required land and the major concern was how the debts would be serviced. The potential impact on ratepayers was of greatest concern, as it was assumed that large increases in rates would be necessary to service the loans. The cost of acquiring land for reconstruction therefore became a significant point of conflict between local authorities and property owners, something which is particularly well demonstrated through the Plymouth enquiry.

[509] Town and Country Planning Act 1944, Clause 15, subsection 5
[510] *Plymouth Evening Herald,* 'Plymouth traders counsel says rebuilding estimates are too high' 30 April 1946.

Plymouth was the first city, nationally as well as within the South West, to undergo a public enquiry into its plan. The enquiry was held over five days between the 30 April and 4 May 1946 and examined both the overall declaratory order for the city centre and the initial compulsory purchase order. The declaratory order for Plymouth covered 178 acres of land in the central part of the city, while the initial compulsory purchase order was for 36 acres in the heart of the old shopping district. The City Council received over five hundred objections; 322 in connection with the Declaratory Order and 183 to the Compulsory Purchase Order.[511] Many of these objections were to the financial aspects of reconstruction, particularly the problem of immobile Cost of Works payments, and therefore had to be disregarded by the enquiry. This in itself caused bad feeling with the blitzed traders, particularly after it was ruled that the City Council did not need to present financial estimates for the cost of replanning and rebuilding as outlined by the *Plan for Plymouth*.[512] The Inspector, Mr Warren, ruled that it was not reasonable to expect the City Council to have accurate figures for the cost of acquiring land at such an early stage and the purpose of the enquiry was to test the overall quality of the plan. As such, he did not think that figures for the cost of acquisition need be presented by the Council.

Traders and property owners felt that this was a deliberate move by the City Council to suppress the true cost of rebuilding. The Counsels for the objectors stated that as it was the ratepayers and taxpayers who would be bearing the cost, the figures were a vital part of the enquiry process and without them, the legal basis of the enquiry

[511] *Western Morning News,* '"No Figures" Ruling at Plymouth Inquiry: Declaratory and Compulsory Orders sought for Area No.1', 30 April 1946.
[512] *Western Morning News,* '"No Figures" Ruling at Plymouth Inquiry: Declaratory and Compulsory Orders sought for Area No.1', 30 April 1946.

and any decisions stemming from it were in question.[513] The feeling amongst property owners was that they were being made to shoulder all the financial burden of reconstruction without gaining any benefits, as they would lose their freeholds, be responsible for the cost of rebuilding and be responsible for the cost of losing their freeholds (and their Cost of Works payments) through the paying of the higher rates necessary for servicing the land loans.[514] The benefits of a better laid-out city and better transport links were not seen as benefits by the affected property owners, as they would not gain through the potential increases in site values which such improvements might create. The argument that no individual should benefit from war damage through increased site values was not appreciated; all property owners could see was that they were paying and everyone else was benefitting.

The Counsels threatened to take the Plymouth case to the High Court if matters of cost were completely excluded from the enquiry, stating that the Minister for Town and Country Planning was acting in a 'quasi-judicial' capacity and was therefore required not to accept any evidence which had not been submitted to the public.[515] The Counsels went on to suggest that the CPO would therefore be invalid under British law. This point came about because the City Council admitted to having prepared estimates for the cost of reconstruction, which had been submitted to the Ministry but had not been submitted to the enquiry.[516] As Plymouth was the first of all the blitzed cities to undergo the enquiry process, there was a concern that this was also setting a precedent in terms of procedure. Ultimately, figures for the cost of

[513] *Western Morning News,* '"No Figures" Ruling at Plymouth Inquiry', 30 April 1946.
[514] *Plymouth Evening Herald,* 'Plymouth traders counsel says rebuilding estimates are too high' 30 April 1946; *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth inquiry plea for the bombed out', 2 May 1946.
[515] *Plymouth Evening Herald,* 'Plymouth Traders' Counsel Says Rebuilding Estimates Are Too High', 30 April 1946.
[516] *Western Morning News,* 'High Court Action is Threatened: Plymouth No.1 Area planning order application', 1 May 1946.

reconstruction were allowed to be requested and presented at the subsequent enquiries in Bristol and Exeter.[517] This is one example of the benefit of using the same Inspector and Counsels for all enquiries, as it led to the formulation of a 'best practice' with regard to the presentation of estimates on reconstruction costs.

This combined with the problems with war damage compensation created a hard knot of opposition to the Declaratory Order and CPO. The Town Clerk, Colin Campbell, explained under cross examination by the objectors Counsels that Plymouth City Council were continuing to press the government for a better financial package and would continue to do so.[518] This was also the line taken by other local councils at their public enquiries and reflects both the dissatisfaction with the 1944 Act and the determination of local authorities to secure a better financial package for reconstruction.

The remaining objections to the *Plan for Plymouth* were about property ownership and new sites for displaced businesses. In Plymouth a number of objections were heard with regard to buildings which would require demolition in order to lay out the planned new road scheme, with suggestions that many of the new roads were not required or did not need to be so wide. A number of objectors suggested that the new road or road improvement affecting their property would not be required as the other proposed road changes would reduce the traffic flow on their street. Property owners in Notte Street and The Crescent put forward objections along these lines, stating that the new road system around the main city centre would render the road

[517] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,000,000 for New Centre Sites', 13 June 1946; 'Final cost of New Centre Sites Will Be Nearer £50,000,000' 14 June 1946; *Western Morning News,* 'Blitzed Area in Exeter: Acquisition Cost £2,481,000', 10 July 1946.
[518] *Western Morning News,* '"No Figures" Ruling at Plymouth Inquiry', 30 April 1946.

alterations affecting their property unnecessary.[519] The Town Clerk pointed out that even the Ministry of Transport had agreed the importance of the road plans in question. The implication was that as the Ministry would be providing much of the funding for roads, they would not agree to unnecessary works.[520]

Although similar types of objections were heard in the other cities, it is this example from Plymouth which best demonstrates the tension between the personal and the public spheres in reconstruction. Very few of these traders or property owners actively objected to the *Plan for Plymouth* as a whole; they only objected to the part affecting them and the potential personal cost. The taking of property under CPO was seen as an attack on the sanctity of personal property, particularly when the property in question was undamaged, and a step toward the nationalisation of all land and property. The loss of property under a CPO was also a very personal matter, as regardless it was the enforced loss of a home or business and all that it represented to the owner. In such circumstances, it was difficult for individuals to look at a city plan objectively and see it as a whole, with its projections of future need and usage and its emphasis on the collective rather than individual good. The loss of such property under CPO added to the growing discontent with reconstruction planning.

Similar objections were particularly prominent at Bristol's enquiry, which was the next of the three cities and also the longest at ten days. The enquiry was held between the 13 and 25 June 1946 and examined the concerns of over three hundred objectors to the reconstruction plan. The City Council was applying for a Declaratory Order for 771 acres, one of the largest Declaratory Orders made by a blitzed city,

[519] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth inquiry plea for bombed out', 2 May 1946.
[520] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth inquiry plea for bombed out', 2 May 1946.

and intended to acquire all of the land at once under a single CPO.[521] The size of the Declaratory Area alarmed many property owners, as the actual acreage of severe war damage was estimated to be only 67 acres, and the Declaratory Order was viewed as a land-grab by the City Council. Property owners argued that the 1944 Act did not cover such a large purchase of land, which constituted a complete town plan rather than the repair of war damage.[522] This is of course exactly what all of the plans forwarded by blitzed cities were – comprehensive town plans. The local authorities had been instructed to plan in such terms and embraced the opportunity to deal with a multitude of urban problems with one blow. Evidently property owners supported this idea only up to the point where it affected them directly, as demonstrated at Plymouth.

In Bristol, the Broadmead plan had never carried general support amongst traders or property owners, and the public enquiry only underlined this. Virtually all of the objectors wished to be excluded from the plan, to retain their freehold and to be allowed to rebuild and continue trading on the same site; allowing this would have made any kind of replanning impossible.[523] Even the proposed new roads and zoning for industry ran against similar opposition, as industrial concerns based in the centre of Bristol stated that they should be allowed to remain as Bristol was a 'commercial city' and retailers should not be given priority over industry.[524] The industries in question, such as the Bristol Brewery, stated that they alone had

[521] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,0000 for New Centre Sites: Disclosed at Bristol inquiry', 13 June 1946.
[522] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,000,000 for centre sites', 13 June 1946.
[523] *Western Daily Press,* '£26,000,000 for centre sites', 13 June 1946; BRO, 38129/3 City and County of Bristol: Town and Country Planning Act 1944 Central Areas Application for a Declaratory Order under Section 1, 'Proceedings at a Public Local Inquiry held at the Central Hall, Old Market Street, Bristol, on 17th June 1946 (fourth day)'; 'Proceedings at a Public Local Inquiry held at...Bristol on Tuesday 18th June 1946 (fifth day)'.
[524] *Western Daily Press,* 'Draft Plan for Rebuilding Bristol – Letters to the Editor: Industry' 18 May 1944; 'Should Bristol Shopping Centre be on Old Site?' 15 June 1946.

created Bristol's prosperity and therefore they should have priority to remain and build new premises over retail concerns. In return, retailers presented the same argument, but on the basis that any change to the retail pattern of Bristol would ruin the city financially, and therefore no changes should be made.[525] The suggested road changes ran into trouble for similar reasons, as traders of all types felt that changes would reduce passing trade and the prosperity of Bristol.

Although these arguments were presented most forcefully at Bristol's enquiry, they can also be found in the Plymouth and Exeter enquiries. As Exeter's war damage was concentrated in the very centre of the city, the Declaratory Order was for a much smaller amount of land, all of which had sustained war damage. As such it was very difficult to argue that the 1944 Act was being misused. Instead the emphasis was on the loss of freehold and the potential damage to trade and prosperity that this would cause.[526] As Plymouth's plan involved laying out afresh the shopping area, creating new roads and heavily zoning the city centre, the argument about the purpose of the 1944 Act was again invoked, with the loss of freeholds and the amount of land the city wished to acquire at the heart of the arguments.[527] Bristol City Council's defence against this accusation was that the war damage in Bristol was wide-spread and the intention was not only to deal with this, but to replan the entire city centre along modern lines.[528]

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[525] *Western Daily Press,* 'Should Bristol Shopping Centre be an Old Site?' 15 June 1946; 'Retailers Plan Bristol Shopping Centre', 15 November 1946.
[526] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter on Tuesday 9th July 1946', pp.5-7; 'Proceedings at a Public Local Enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter, on Wednesday 10th July 1946, pp.59-61.
[527] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Enquiry Plea for the Bombed Out', 2 May 1946.
[528] BRO, City and County of Bristol Town and Country Planning Act 1944 – Application for a Declaratory Area under Section 1: Proceedings at a public local inquiry held at the Council House, Bristol, on Friday 21st June 1946, p.17.

As already indicated, this did nothing to soothe the objectors with the purpose of the 1944 act instead being questioned. It was suggested by the Counsel that the City Council had no right to execute a comprehensive replanning scheme under the 1944 act and were instead stretching the act for its own purposes. The City Council pointed to the provision within the 1944 act to deal with areas of blight 'adjacent or contingent' with the war damaged areas. As Bristol's damage was widespread, this clause allowed for the type of land purchase and replanning which the Council was trying to effect.

Exeter's enquiry followed swiftly after Bristol's, being held between 9 and 13 July 1946. As Exeter's damage was much more centralised than that of either Plymouth or Bristol, the City Council was requesting a much smaller area under the Declaratory Order at 76 acres, which would be covered by two separate CPOs.[529] The plan attracted 121 objections, all similar in nature to those seen in the other South Western cites. As with Plymouth and Bristol, the majority were connected with either compensation or the loss of freeholds. There were also some concerns at the size of sites and the positioning of service roads, as some traders wanted deeper sites. These objections were given careful consideration, with Sharp agreeing that the lines of the service roads could be altered to give larger sites.[530] This was incorporated into the later plans, demonstrating that trader concerns were taken seriously and did result in some changes to plans.

It is notable that the tone of the Exeter objectors seems more acrimonious than that seen in the other cities, with a much greater sense of indignation at the City Council's proposals to acquire land. It is also notable that there was more

[529] *Western Morning News,* 'Blitzed Area in Exeter: Acquisition Cost £2,481,000', 10 July 1946.
[530] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter, on Tuesday 9th July 1946', pp.26-29.

representation of the independent traders rather than the multiple stores, banks and insurance companies, suggesting that city centre property in Exeter was mostly in the hands of individuals rather than large companies, a conclusion reinforced by the group of independent traders represented by Mr J H Scott Henderson, a counsel present at all three enquiries, who requested to be allowed to rebuild their sites as a block.[531]

The traders had all been situated on the north side of the High Street and produced a plan to rebuild this part of the street, but only on the condition that they retain their freeholds. In return for retaining their freeholds, they stated that they would give the Council 'the most valuable part of the sites', i.e. the frontages, to allow for road widening.[532] The traders in question interpreted 'replanning' to mean merely widening roads to try to alleviate traffic congestion, rather than a more comprehensive city improvement scheme. This interpretation led to what they saw as the generous offer of the land which had formed the frontage of their sites for road widening. The Town Clerk, Cyril Newman, responded to the traders' plan by stating that if they had made such an offer to the Council when it was trying to effect road-widening during the interwar period 'the Council would have expired in shock'.[533] Newman went on to declare that the Council could not allow islands of freehold land within the replanned area and therefore the traders' suggestion could not be accepted.

[531] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public inquiry...Exeter on Tuesday 9th July 1946', pp.30-32.
[532] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public enquiry...Exeter, on Tuesday 9th July 1946', p.30.
[533] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public enquiry... Exeter, on Tuesday 9th July 1946', p.45.

The suggestion of this group of traders demonstrates how keenly felt the loss of freeholds under the terms of the 1944 Act was by property owners, particularly as it was felt that those who had suffered war damage were being penalised for something beyond their control. The root of this was that many property owners who had escaped war damage were unaffected by reconstruction plans, and would therefore retain their freeholds and escape the burden of rebuilding their properties. In Exeter the very heart of the city centre around the Cathedral had escaped damage, which meant that property owners in that area not only still had their original premises but could also continue to enjoy their freeholds. Those on the edge of the CPO area felt this was a particular injustice – for the sake of a few yards they lost everything.[534]

The same argument was also forwarded at the Plymouth enquiry, with particular reference to the hardship caused by the application of war damage compensation in reconstruction areas.[535] In some ways Bristol City Council took the most pragmatic approach to this problem by applying for a Declaratory Order which covered the entire area they wished to replan, therefore ensuring that everyone would hold their property on a leasehold basis regardless of whether they had suffered war damage. As described, this instead led to the accusations of overstepping their remit in terms of reconstruction, with the loss of freeholds felt every bit as bitterly as in Exeter.

The suggestion does, however, raise some interesting questions with regard to the methods of reconstruction. The decision by the majority of local authorities to acquire city centre land in order to replan and rebuild in a comprehensive and

[534] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public enquiry... Exeter, on Wednesday 10th July 1946', p.60.
[535] *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth Enquiry Plea for the Bombed Out', 2 May 1946.

coherent way was practical in many respects. Virtually all blitzed cities had pre-existing problems with traffic congestion, narrow streets, overcrowding and the location of industries, and the need to rebuild post-war offered an opportunity to tackle these problems as a whole. As city centres were usually a tangle of ownerships and leaseholds, it seemed practical to put all the land and property under single ownership rather than trying to deal piecemeal with each individual site and its claims.

The piecemeal method had been the only one available interwar and had proved tortuous in terms of making changes to city centres. Against this practicality were the claims of property owners, who were understandably aggrieved to be forced to sell their freeholds, particularly when traders and property owners who had not suffered war damage often had both their property and their freehold left intact. The suggestion by the Exeter traders that they should work together to produce a block of buildings, which they were prepared to build according to the Councils suggested designs, offered an alternative vision. Would it have been possible to encourage all blitzed traders and property owners within a proposed reconstruction area to follow a similar method? Could similar groups be created for each street and each area within the blitzed city, who built together to a design put forward by the local authority, with street lines adjusted to create a better street pattern?

It is tempting to say that this could have been effected and local authorities should have tried harder to work on such as basis, which would have maintained private property interests and would not have required local authorities to take large loans to buy out city centre freeholds. It may also have solved some of the compensation problems facing property owners, as such a method might not have required the complete removal of individuals from their sites, allowing them to claim

Cost of Works payments. It is possible that such a method might have worked in a small city like Exeter, particularly as the proposed new road system went around the city centre rather than through it and therefore did not require a complete replanning of the existing street pattern. There would have been some problems with sites which occupied the main crossroads of the city (then known as London Inn Square) as this area did require some reorganisation to allow for a better flow of traffic, but the majority of sites on the main shopping streets could have been left intact, particularly after changes to the road plans were made by the Ministry of Transport. However, it is doubtful that such a method could have been used in Bristol or Plymouth, which presented rather different problems.

Plymouth had a particularly difficult street pattern in terms of modern traffic, as the streets were narrow and provided no definite thoroughfare across the city centre.[536] New roads were the most practical way of tackling this problem, particularly when the projected increases in motor traffic were taken into account. In addition to this, the city's central wards of Vintry, Drake, St Peter's and St Andrew's were acknowledged to be severely overcrowded in terms of housing, and the replanning of the city centre offered the chance to alleviate this problem.[537] The decision of the Admiralty to expand Devonport Dockyard also created an additional problem, as the shopping district of Devonport would require resiting as a result.[538] Abercrombie and Paton Watson's *Plan for Plymouth* took all of these elements into account in its redesigning of the city, and it would have been extremely difficult to solve these problems without this redesign. Attempting to carry out such a replanning and

[536] Jeremy Gould, *Plymouth: Vision of Modern City* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2010), p.4.
[537] Gould, *Plymouth,* p.41; Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth,* pp.38-39. See also the map facing p.39 'Map Showing Distribution of Population'.
[538] Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth,* p.32.

reconstruction effort without the land being under single ownership would have been almost impossible with so many competing interests involved. All of the enquiries demonstrate that individual property owners were only really interested in reconstruction and replanning as far as it affected them directly, and would therefore have been extremely difficult to persuade to act in the common interest of the city without the use of a CPO.

In Bristol such a method would have solved the objections to the city centre plan, as it would have left the shopping centre on its original site at Wine Street/Castle Street. Bristol traders were particularly unhappy at having to leave the old shopping district and spent some time trying to produce a suitable alternative plan. However, during the consultation stages of planning, the City Council found that the majority of traders wanted additional space in order to expand their premises. In addition to this, the fire service had recommended greater fire breaks between buildings. In order to provide these two things, more space was required, which led to the decision to move the shopping centre. As with Plymouth, it would have been possible to rebuild on the old street pattern, but it was not practical in terms of future needs for retail space.

With regard to the objections based on compensation and land ownership, allowing traders to group together and build blocks of buildings would have solved this issue. However, there were other possible ways of alleviating these problems beyond leaving the city centres unplanned. The compensation issue was partially solved by central government in 1947, when the values used for the compulsory purchase of property and the level of compensation was adjusted to current prices instead of the 1939 value. It had originally been expected that land and property values would be

decreased by the war rather than increased, which was the other factor in choosing the 1939 value; it would ensure that property owners did not suffer if values were depressed by the war. However, land and property values actually increased, and it was eventually agreed that it would therefore be sensible to use current values. This decision helped to solve some of the objections to the compensation clauses but did not initially solve the problem of immobile Cost of Works payments. The objections based on this factor are interesting in other respects, as they suggest that the compensation system had more flexibility than initially suggested. It also raises some questions about the cost of building.

In theory the Cost of Works payment could only be claimed to repair a building, not in cases where it was considered a 'total loss'. The latter was defined as when repairs would exceed the total of the Value Payment (which was calculated against the difference between the value of the building in 1939 and its value if sold in its damaged state), which was presumed to also include cases where the building required complete rebuilding.[539]

However, there are numerous cases in the three cities that suggest that the Cost of Works payment could be claimed when the building had been totally destroyed, presumably indicating that the cost of rebuilding was considered to be less than the total of the Value Payment. Yet property owners consistently complained that the Value Payment would not be enough to rebuild and clamoured for the Cost of Works payment to be allowed to be paid when they had to move sites.[540] There was some adjustment in the Cost of Works to allow for the increase in material costs, but this does not entirely explain why the Cost of Works was

[539] TNA, HLG 88/10, Advisory Panel for Reconstruction of City Centres: Finance 'Degree to Which War Damage Payments Will Contribute to Financing Development', 21 November 1943.
[540] *Western Morning News,* 'High Court Action is Threatened', 1 May 1946.

considered to be so much more valuable. This is particularly notable once the values are adjusted to current prices from the 1939 value, as property owners would receive the current value of their property if it was sold on the open market in its undamaged state. Despite the adjusted values, which would have resulted in much higher payments being made to owners, they continued to call for the Cost of Works payment to be made available as the amounts being paid were not enough to cover rebuilding. This suggests that either owners did not fully understand how Cost of Works was meant to operate and assumed that it was an unlimited payment against the literal cost of building anew, or that owners consistently overstated the cost of rebuilding in an attempt to secure more compensation. It is not at all clear which was operating, and the available data has so far proved inconclusive on this matter. This would most definitely warrant additional research in the future to further untangle how compensation and finance for reconstruction were operating.

The question of land tenure also requires some scrutiny. The suggested leasehold system was deeply unpopular with property owners, who felt that a leasehold property was much less valuable to them than a freehold property. It was the larger multiple traders and finance companies who saw the value in holding leasehold property, as it formed part of a portfolio of similar property which they were able to profit from. It is not obvious why the government decided to prevent the sale of land back to the former owners, but the most likely reason is to prevent individuals from profiting by the war. It was assumed that replanning in town centres would increase land values through improved amenity and there was concern that individuals would profit from this increased value. The clauses within the 1944 Act which prevented the sale of sites back to owners and the Cost of Works payments from becoming

mobile were attempts to prevent individuals from profiting from work funded by public money. Central government (wartime coalition and post-war Labour) and local authorities alike felt that it should be the public who benefitted from the spending of public money, not private property owners.[541]

There was however, an alternative system which could have been employed if the object was indeed to keep increased land values in the public sphere. The Exeter solicitor who corresponded with the Ministry, Henry Michelmore, had suggested that a fee farm rent be used rather than a leasehold.[542] It is likely that this would have satisfied all parties, as it gave the holder all the rights of a freehold but retained the ownership in different hands. This would have allowed the local authority to retain the ownership, and therefore ultimate control of the land and its value, while giving the former owners the security that they felt leasehold did not supply. The suggestion was given serious consideration by the Ministry who also felt that it would potentially solve the insecurities caused by leasehold tenure.[543] However, after this initial interest, the use of the fee farm rent does not appear again as a serious alternative to leasehold tenure. It is unclear why the idea was not pursued or suggested to local authorities as an alternative to leasehold tenure. This may be linked to the Treasury influence on reconstruction, as Treasury funds would help support the purchase of land by local authorities. As such, the Treasury may have felt that leasehold tenure allowed local authorities better control over public assets and may have vetoed the use of fee farm rents as a result.

[541] DHC, 5872 City Planning Officers Files Box 2: 'Proceedings at a local public enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter, on Tuesday 9th July 1946', p.46.
[542] TNA, HLG71/590 Letter from Michelmore to Portal re leasehold tenure, 4 December 1942.
[543] TNA, HLG71/590, Memo from Mr Schaffer to Mr Hill re Michelmore's proposed bill, 9 September 1943.

Conclusions

The drafting and passing of the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 marks a turning point in reconstruction history. The Act had a long and difficult journey onto the statute books as the issues at stake were complex and controversial. The decision not to pass a comprehensive planning bill, but to just tackle the problem of war damage reflected this, as it avoided the difficult questions of land ownership and rights. However, this made the Act a half-measure and it did not fully tackle the problems which blitzed cities were facing. As a result, it caused a split between property owners and local authorities over reconstruction and created a decline in support for reconstruction plans.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1944 was a disappointment to the blitzed cities, as it provided no finance for rebuilding beyond the existing war damage compensation and loans for the purchase of lands. Additionally it did not make Cost of Works compensation ‘mobile’, denying blitzed traders the type of compensation they thought was the most useful. The Act also prohibited the sale of sites back to owners at the end of the reconstruction process, thus depriving blitzed traders and property owners of their freeholds. The combination of these factors resulted in the decline of enthusiasm and support for reconstruction plans, as traders and property owners felt they were bearing an unreasonable cost with little reward. This is demonstrated through the public enquiries, as the majority of objections were to the loss of freeholds rather than to the plans as a whole. Property owners in Plymouth and Exeter were generally supportive of the idea of replanning the cities, which would remove the problems of the past, but wanted their own property excluded

from the declaratory order areas and the compulsory purchase orders. In all cases they stated that the exclusion of their property would not affect the overall plan, which demonstrates how separate the concepts of reconstruction and private property were to the objectors. The exclusion of all of the properties in question would have rendered the reconstruction plans impossible, but this could not be seen by the objectors who were only thinking in terms of how the plan affected them directly. In this sense the objections to reconstruction plans and the general decline in planning enthusiasm had little to do with the city plans themselves, instead being the product of poor legislation and individual self-interest in property terms.

Bristol was the only exception to this, as the Broadmead plan did not carry wide support. This was still partially due to property ownership and compensation issues, as traders were unhappy at being moved from their original sites for the same reasons as traders in Exeter and Plymouth; the loss of freeholds and Cost of Works payments. However, there were other concerns and objections to the Broadmead plan, including the possibility of flooding on the site and the poor quality of the subsoil for building, which added to the hostility of traders to the plan.

The 1944 Act can therefore be seen as the root of the decline in support for reconstruction plans in blitzed cities, providing neither the financial support nor legislative tools promised to the cities in 1941 and 1942. This marks the beginning of serious retrenchment on the part of central government in terms of blitzed city reconstruction, with the reasons for this course of action becoming apparent during 1945 and 1946. The state of the British economy post-war directed spending away from blitzed city reconstruction, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. The 1944 Act marks the beginning of this retrenchment, as it became apparent that government

investment would be badly needed in other sectors of the economy which would provide a better economic return.

Chapter 4 - Economic Constraints 1946-1950

By the end of 1946 frustration was mounting in the three cities at the lack of progress in reconstruction. The public enquiries into the three cities plans had brought a certain amount of acceptance, if not support, for the plans amongst property owners and traders, and all were keen to see a start made on building. However, Britain's precarious economic position throughout the late 1940s saw reconstruction of city centres become a low priority for central government and as a result blitzed cities faced an increasing number of obstacles and constraints. Materials and finance were strictly controlled by central government, with no allocations made to blitzed cites for city centre reconstruction until 1949, and then only token amounts.

The cities faced increasing pressure from the Ministry of Town and Country planning to change and curtail their plans, with Bristol in particular finding Ministry support wavering in the face of economic pressures. In addition to this, new regulations regarding standing property and transport spending forced changes to some aspects of the plans, most notably in Exeter. The constraints placed on the cities by central government were not always obvious to property owners and traders, leading to conflict and further pressure to alter plans in order to rebuild more quickly.

Against this background of conflict and constraint, some reconstruction work was progressing in other sectors, most notably housing. However, the pace of building could not match demand and the councils found themselves under fire from within, as political opponents saw an opportunity to attack the leadership in the three cities. At the same time, the progress in housing antagonised some city centre property owners and traders, who saw the progress in housing as an indication that materials and labour were freely available but were being withheld from them.

In 1947 new planning legislation was implemented, with the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, which superseded much of the 1944 Act. This changed some of the planning principles that the three cities had been working under and also changed the basis of compensation to blitzed traders. The new legislation gave the three cities a wider range of tools for planning and reconstruction, but did cause some problems, most notably for Bristol, owing to new rules on the acquisition of land. The Act also required that all local planning authorities review the development needs of their area and produce a local plan, which meant that the blitzed cities had to review and extend their existing plans. Despite these obstacles, the three cities managed to secure compulsory purchase orders for city centre land, negotiate leases for sites and make a start on city centre reconstruction by 1949.

Beginnings, Delays and Economic Constraints

The immediate post-war years were characterised by a series of economic crises that severely restricted the nation's attempts to rebuild, both economically and physically. The sudden end to the war in the Far East in August 1945, and the termination of the Lend-Lease agreement that came with this victory, left the economy reeling and disrupted the planned demobilisation of men and industry. Materials and labour were in short supply during the latter part of 1945 and 1946, with both restricted and directed by the Board of Trade. Building licences remained in place throughout the 1940s to restrict building to the areas of greatest need, while separate licences were also required for restricted materials such as timber and steel. Further economic crises in 1947 and 1949, plus the rearmament programme necessitated by the Korean War, ensured that these restrictions remained in place into the next decade,

while continued shortages of building labour compounded the problems. The economic problems meant that city centre reconstruction was a low priority for central government in the first years of peace. The nation was spectacularly in debt and had been forced to divest itself of many of its assets by the United States government before it would extend assistance.[544] There were also outstanding debts to Commonwealth nations who had been extended credit for war goods. The nation's non-war industry and its export market had been reduced during the war in order to concentrate on the war effort. As a result exports in 1945 were only 30% of the 1939 level.[545] Capital investment had generally been suspended during the war which, combined with war damage and the emphasis on war production, had left the nation's infrastructure and industry in a poor state by August 1945.

The government's priorities were therefore to increase exports as quickly as possible in order to restore the nation's fortunes and to invest in projects and infrastructure which would aid this. From the point of view of physical reconstruction, this meant that building work was restricted to industrial building and housing. Commercial buildings of other types, such as retail and office space, were not considered economic priorities, and therefore the rebuilding of bomb damaged town centres would have to wait.[546]

At the end of hostilities in 1945, the restrictions on building work were not an immediate concern for blitzed cities. Only a few, such as Plymouth and Coventry, had completed their initial planning and all still had to go through the process of public

[544] Alan P Dobson, *US Wartime Aid to Britain 1940-1946* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp.25-29; Sidney Pollard, *The Development of the British Economy 1914-1990* (London: Edward Arnold, 4th edition, 1992), p.177-178.
[545] Alec Cairncross, *The Years of Recovery: British Economic Policy 1945-1951* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.6.
[546] TNA, T229/520, Memo to Sir John Wright re Investment Programmes Priorities, 13 December 1947.

enquiries and negotiating the purchase of the city centre land. Once the process of enquiries and land purchases had been undertaken, sites would have to be allocated, leases drawn up and the designs for new buildings submitted to local authorities. The initial restrictions on building were not, therefore, a major concern to blitzed cities as it was acknowledged that they would not be in a position to begin rebuilding for another eighteen months at least.

In addition to this, it was recognised that the building industry and its subsidiary industries would need time to re-establish themselves. Labour and materials would be in short supply until demobilisation of both service personnel and industry was complete, which would act as a brake on building regardless.[547] The nation still required large amounts of first-aid repair and building work to make houses habitable and restore industrial premises to a functional state, which would absorb much of the available building labour and materials. Although the building of retail and commercial buildings was prohibited, these other types of building were allowed to progress during 1945 and 1946.[548] In most towns, the progress of housing would have been the most obvious symbol of the post-war reconstruction that had been promised.

Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all made good progress in housing between 1945 and 1947. The advanced planning and site preparation undertaken in the three cities prior to the end of the war, as described in chapter two, had allowed a swift start in house building post-war. The cities were also in receipt of the prefabricated bungalows provided by the Temporary Housing Programme, which provided over 156,000 bungalows to blitzed cities nationally in order to help house those whose homes had

[547] *Western Morning News,* 'Labour and Materials: Priorities for Blitzed Towns' 25 July 1946.
[548] TNA, PREM8/228, 'Progress Report on Housing October 1946; Memorandum by the Minister of Health', C.P 45 (274), 8 November 1945.

been destroyed.[549] These bungalows provided the fastest completion rate in the early post-war years, with Plymouth alone having completed 1,062 by December 1946.[550]

Permanent house completions were also high in the three cities, with around 3,000 houses completed by the end of 1947.[551] However, this rate of completion could not keep up with demand, as the combination of war damage, the high rate of family creation and the wartime hiatus in building created a severe housing shortage. In 1945 the three cities had a collective housing waiting list of around eighteen thousand, rising to just over thirty-four thousand by 1947, dwarfing the housing completions.[552] The slower-than-expected rate of housing completions reflected the immediate post-war shortages of labour and materials, which restricted building. The government had left in place the building licence system established during war in order to conserve and direct scarce resources, which meant that all work over £100 required a government licence to proceed. Without a licence, it was not possible to obtain labour, materials or finance to build. City centre reconstruction was not considered a priority and as such no licences were approved for such building until much later. Despite the problems of labour and materials, the overall rate of construction of new municipal houses post-war far outstripped the construction rate seen immediately post-First World War, with 354, 188 permanent houses built nationally by 1948.[553]

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[549] Greg Stevenson, *Palaces for the People: Prefabs in post-war Britain* (London: Batsford, 2003), p.7.
[550] *Western Morning News,* 'Housing Race', 3 December 1946.
[551] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes; Housing Committee, 16 December 1947; *Western Daily Press,* 'Housing Total a Record', 2 March 1948; *Western Morning News,* 'City Completes 1,002nd Permanent House', 21 October 1947.
[552] *Western Morning News,* 'Exeter's MP and Houses', 18 March 1945; 'City Housing Problems: Discussion in Nelson Ward', 19 September 1945; '17,000 Want Houses: Devon Cities Waiting Lists', 26 April 1947; *Western Daily Press,* 'Lord Mayor and Housing Delay', 7 May 1945.
[553] *Western Daily Press,* 'Housing Total a Record', 2 March 1948.

The shortages of labour and materials were initially due to the transition between a wartime and peacetime economy. Labour was a particular problem in 1945 and 1946 due to the number of men who had not yet been demobilised.[554] In addition to this, those skilled in the building trades were in short supply more generally and worked under the direction of the Board of Trade. Bristol demonstrates both of these problems, with it being reported that the city had around half of the number of pre-war building operatives in 1945, while some 1,800 men had been allocated to building work in other cities.[555] Building firms awarded tenders for priority housing work could apply for their workers to be released by the Board of Trade back to their home city, but there was no guarantee that the request would be granted. All three South Western cities used prisoner of war labour to help alleviate the labour shortage, with German and Italian labourers working on housing sites and infrastructure projects such as roads.[556]

Labour continued to be a problem until the end of the decade, as the economic crisis of 1947 led to the redirection of labour away from areas considered non-essential to the nation's economic recovery, including the construction industry.[557] Originally the labour shortages were not expected to continue beyond the first years of peace, as it was expected that the demobilisation and post-demobilisation training of service

[554] TNA, PREM 8/228 Prime Minister's Office: Proposed Statement of Policy by M/Heath Draft White Paper of Temporary Housing Plan 1945-1946, CP (45) 230 'Labour Shortages in the Building Materials and Components Industries', 15 October 1945; *Western Morning News,* 'Labour and Materials: Priorities for blitzed towns', 25 July 1946.
[555] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Extra Report from the Housing Committee, 26 June 1945; *Western Daily Press,* 'Rebuilding Problem in Bristol', 7 November 1945.
[556] *Western Daily Press,* 'German Prisoners for Bristol', 13 June 1945; *Western Morning News,* 'Housing in Plymouth: Direct Labour and Free Enterprise', 4 September 1945; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 29 May 1945 .
[557] TNA HLG52/1574 IPC Review of Investment Programme: Letter from Plowden to Douglas re review of investment programme plus Annex I, 15 August 1947.

personnel would swell the labour force, particularly in the construction industry.[558] Instead some of this labour was directed to export industries, prolonging the labour shortage and retarding the reconstruction process.

These shortages of labour were emphasised by all three cities applying to the Board of Trade for additional labour as 'Areas of Special Need'. The cities had been declared 'Areas of Special Need' for housing in 1946 due to their 'exceptional war damage', giving them priority for materials and labour for housing.[559] The MP for Plymouth Drake, Hubert Medland, enquired in March 1947 whether the South Western cities could apply for assistance from the Ministry of Works mobile labour force to ease the situation.[560] At that stage the cities were denied this option, but after a deputation to the minister in May 1947 were granted an additional 500 men across the three cities to allow for more house building. [561] This 'flying squad' of additional labour demonstrates just how short of suitably trained operatives the country was, as this small number of men was all that could be spared to an area which was acknowledged to have serious housing difficulties. As such, labour for all types of building remained in short supply until the end of the decade, slowing all types of building work and adding to the frustrations of blitzed cities.

In addition to the labour shortages, materials for building were also in short supply with timber and steel proving particularly problematic. Steel was an important export product and was being directed to these markets rather than towards building.[562]

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[558] DHC Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 23 October 1945.
[559] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 26 February 1946; *Western Morning News,* 'Building Priority: Ministry's New Five Year Plan', 20 February 1946.
[560] *Western Morning News,* 'No Mobile Labour', 18 March 1947.
[561] *Western Morning News* 'One in Two Blitzed: Cities Housing Needs Admitted' 24 May 1947; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 27 May 1947
[562] This included the direction of steel towards manufacturing for export, with industries expected to direct around 75% of the products to the export market – see Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* p.22.

Wood presented the opposite problem, as much of Britain's timber needs were met through imports. At a time of great financial difficulties, imports were limited as much as possible in order to save precious dollars and resources, which meant wood for building was in short supply.[563] Therefore any building system which could reduce the use of these two products was to be welcomed. The use of non-traditional, prefabricated methods of building was heavily encouraged by the government as a result.[564] This also had the added benefit of easing the shortage of skilled building labour, as non-traditional houses could be built by unskilled labour. It became common practice to insist that local authorities accept a quota of non-traditional houses as part of their housing allocation in order to try to speed up construction.[565] In addition to saving skilled labour and traditional building materials, these methods could utilise waste materials from other industries and absorb some over-produced materials from war industries, such as aluminium.[566] In the South West, the Cornish Unit system was a prime example of the former, making use of china clay waste to produce concrete.

Although the shortage of labour was acknowledged by blitzed traders and property owners, the shortage of building materials was viewed as an excuse for delaying rebuilding by some, as demonstrated by a number of Exeter traders. The Chamber of Commerce attacked the City Council over the lack of progress in city centre building, stating that materials and labour were available but they were prevented from starting building by the lack of licences. [567] This view appears to have been circulating

[563] Cairncross, *Years of Recovery,* pp.141-143.
[564] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bevan's Ten Standard Types' 24 September 1946;
[565] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee 27 April 1948; *Express & Echo,* 'City Critic of Ministry', 28 July 1948.
[566] Greg Stephenson, *Palaces for the People,* pp.67-68.
[567] *Western Morning News,* 'Exeter Has No 'Drive': Trader blames state control' 20 February 1947.

amongst some citizens and political groups, with attacks on the licensing system appearing regularly across all local press outlets. A letter from the Ratepayers Association of Bristol again suggests that the licensing system was seen as way for local authorities to deliberately block building, particularly by private enterprise, rather than as a rationing system for materials.[568]

Accusations that local authorities were lacking in drive and were deliberately dragging their feet over reconstruction also begin to circulate in this period, particularly in relation to the building of temporary shops. Alongside the accusations regarding building licences, the Exeter Chamber of Commerce also claimed that 'places like Bristol could get it done. It made them think that Exeter was behind the times as regards to drive'.[569] However, at this stage Bristol City Council were still wrangling with the MTCP over their compulsory purchase orders and had not made any kind of start on building at all. A Plymouth Conservative councillor, Mr E. S Leatherby, made a similar claim with regard to rebuilding, stating that Exeter was building shops in brick while Plymouth was still proposing to erect temporary shops of concrete. He 'could not understand why Exeter could build houses and shops of brick and cement' while Plymouth could not.[570] As demonstrated by the Exeter Chamber of Commerce, Exeter was not building brick shops. The city had applied for temporary shops in late 1946, but they were not approved by the MTCP until January 1948, leaving Exeter in the same position as Plymouth during this time.[571]

[568] *Western Daily Press,* Letters to the Editor 'Bristol Rates', 11 March 1946.
[569] *Western Morning News,* 'Exeter Has No 'Drive: Trader blames state control' 20 February 1947; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Replanning Committee, 24 June 1947.
[570] *Western Morning News,* 'Stop Demolitions and Get on With Building' 2 December 1947.
[571] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Replanning Committee, 9 November 1948; Replanning Committee, 29 January 1948.

The general complaints about the slow pace of building, both in housing and central areas, across all groups from traders to councillors demonstrates a surprising level of ignorance about the economic situation which was causing the shortages of materials and labour. There appears to have been little understanding of the export drive that was directing goods away from home markets, including building materials, and the opposite need to conserve imports.

1946 had proved to be a more stable economic year than 1945, with the steady demobilisation of men and industry yielding increases in industrial output and exports. The loss of Lend-Lease assistance was tempered by the USA extending a line of credit to the UK on reasonably generous terms. This, combined with a loan from Canada, helped the UK to import the goods it needed in terms of food and raw materials, which in turn helped to stabilise the economy.[572]

However, 1947 saw a fresh crisis. As part of the terms of the financial agreement with the USA, the UK was expected to make sterling fully convertible by July 1947. [573] With the dollar area being the main source of goods and raw materials for the war-ravaged areas, there was a shortage of dollars in many economies. In contrast, a number of nations held a surplus of sterling as a result of the war. The end product was a run on the UKs dollar reserves once sterling was made fully convertible, causing serious problems with the nation's ability to pay for imported goods. Convertibility was suspended within a month and the nation's imports had to be slashed to save dollars, while exports needed to increase rapidly in order to restore equilibrium to the balance of payments.[574] In addition to this, the loans

[572] For detailed breakdown see Cairncross, *Years of Recovery,* chapter 5 'The American Loan' pp.88-120 ; Pollard, *The Development of the British Economy,* p.194.
[573] Pollard, Ibid p.194.
[574] Cairncross, *The Years of Recovery,* pp.141-142.

extended by the USA and Canada were running out, and the nation was not yet in a position to fully support itself. A programme of extensive cuts was proposed in August 1947, which slashed import expenditure, curtailed labour movement and restricted both private and public investment.[575]

The impact of this on reconstruction was the further rationing of materials essential to building, such as steel and timber. House building was restricted for several years from 1947, with even building with non-traditional systems limited, and priority given to housing for rural and industrial areas.[576] The former was partially connected to the need to reduce exports, as agriculture was heavily encouraged and supported to produce higher yields in order to save on imports. Providing housing for agricultural workers therefore became a priority, along with housing for those involved in the major industries, such as steel, coal and manufactures such as cars.[577] The restrictions on labour saw all labour for essential industries allocated via labour exchanges, while reductions in manpower were effected in economic sectors considered 'non-essential', including housing and energy.[578]

The reductions in building labour and the direction of all building resources to specific areas of housing and industrial building further insured that city centre reconstruction remained on hold, conserving labour, materials, investment and spending in the process. The seriousness of the situation was impressed on local authorities at the Town and Country Planning Conference in October 1947, when the

[575] *Times*, 'Cuts All Round to Meet the Crisis', 7 August 1947; *Financial Times,* 'Control of Labour', 7 August 1947; TNA HLG52/1574 IPC Review of Investment Programme: Letter from Plowden to Douglas re review of investment programme plus Annex I, 15 August 1947.
[576] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee 16 December 1947; TNA, HLG52/1574, Investment Programmes Committee; Letter to Sir William Douglas, Ministry of Health, from E.W Plowden, Cabinet Office, re review of investment programme, 15 August 1947.
[577] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 16 December 1947.
[578] *Times*, 'Cuts All Round to Meet the Crisis', 7 August 1947; *Financial Times,* 'Control of Labour', 7 August 1947.

Treasury stated that city centre reconstruction was 'a luxury and labour must be reserved for other work'.[579] As such, local authorities were advised to 'use the crisis and hiatus in work it brought' to finalise plans, begin negotiating leases for sites and prioritise groundwork so that building could begin directly once the economic situation eased. [580]

Despite this rather bleak national picture, traders repeatedly blamed local authorities for the slow pace of city centre reconstruction, believing that it was local authorities rather than the Board of Trade that were refusing building licences. The economic situation was widely publicised through both the national and local press, making it difficult to understand why traders had not grasped the root of the problem. It could be argued that the economic composition of the three cities contributed to this disconnect, as they were not manufacturing bases for principal export products. As such, the three cities could be considered as out of touch with the situation.

However, Bristol City Council initiated an export drive in the city by compiling a prospectus of exporting firms for potential markets in the Americas and undamaged European markets, demonstrating awareness of the situation. In Exeter, a firm of stationers, Wheaton's, wrote a letter to the Board of Trade via the City Council highlighting its own small export trade. Wheaton's hoped that in doing this materials and investment would be made available for city centre reconstruction, as they stated that many small firms had similar export trades and could aid the national export drive if given the opportunity.[581] Certainly some traders did understand the situation,

[579] DHC; 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 File No.1 – Report of Ministry of Town and Country Planning Conference on Reconstruction Problems, 23 & 24 October 1947, p.1.
[580] Ibid, p.1.
[581] DHC, 5896 City Architects papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from A Wheaton to City Planning Officer re overseas trade and building licences, 3 September 1948.

as the Exeter firm of Bruford's demonstrated with a letter to the *Express and Echo*. The owners had questioned Exeter City Council with regard to the current reconstruction situation and established that the delays regarding building licenses were due to the Board of Trade, not the Council. They also highlighted the export drive and its absorption of materials such as steel away from rebuilding projects as the reason for the refusals. Like Wheaton's, Bruford's also alluded to the contribution that small firms could make to the nation's wealth if allowed to rebuild.[582]

By the end of 1948 the complaints about building licences and the lack of materials were being directed toward the government, suggesting that eventually an understanding of the situation was reached. By this time the allocation of sites and negotiation of leases was also well underway, which may have helped to reassure traders that they would be able to build again in the near future. The battles which the three city councils went through with the MTCP with regard to compulsory purchase orders and the wider plans may also have helped to underline the impact with the national economic situation had on reconstruction.

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning

The economic crisis of 1947 and its impact saw the advice to blitzed cities remain unchanged; 'continue your planning for reconstruction, so that a start might be made as soon as possible'.[583] Blitzed cities were still trying to acquire the land required for reconstruction and found a change in the planning legislation and the economic crisis

[582] *Express & Echo*, Letters to the Editor, 'Can Exeter Build?' 19 August 1948.
[583] DHC, 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 – C.A.R.S File No.1 Central Areas Reconstruction 1946-1948, 'Report of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Conference on Reconstruction Problems 23rd and 24th October 1947'.

of 1947 creating obstructions to this. The three cities also suffered objections to their plans from the MTCP, despite previous support for them, and had difficulty gaining approval for them. Additionally, other aspects of their plans fell victim to the economic constraints, as the Ministry of Transport refused to fund some road plans, while new government guidelines prevented the demolition of some standing property. However, there were some advances, with the 1947 Act providing a better framework for planning and changed the basis of compensation to property owners, easing some problems in this direction.

Blitzed cities had been promised a more complete reform of planning legislation since the passing of the 1944 Act. The 1944 Act had provided a framework for dealing with war damage, but was acknowledged as only addressing some of the problems facing local authorities.[584] The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act provided the reform of planning law which had been promised since the release of the Uthwatt Report in 1942. The major change it enacted was the revoking of development rights for land owners. Under the previous planning acts, land owners were free to develop their land however they saw fit, with exceptions only being in place for urban areas and those within planning schemes.[585] The 1947 act dissolved this right and made all land subject to planning permission.

The previous right to claim compensation when a planning application was turned down was also dissolved with this clause, relieving local authorities of one of the main financial and logistical burdens of previous planning acts.[586] A fund of £300 million was provided to compensate land owners for the loss of their development

[584] Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.1,* p.183; S.A de Smith, 'Town and Country Planning Act 1947', *The Modern Law Review,* 11/1, January 1948, p.72.
[585] John Sheail, 'Interwar Planning in Britain: The wider context', *Journal of Urban History,* 11/3 (1985), pp.335-351
[586] Smith, 'Town and Country Planning Act 1947', pp.72-81.

rights and the development value of their land. The present development value of land was to be assessed and compensation paid for the loss of this value, with all claims to be handled by a new Central Land Board.[587] Compensation would no longer be paid when planning permission was refused, lifting one of the heaviest burdens on local authorities, and a development charge had to be paid on all developments.

The 1947 Act also required all planning authorities to produce development plans for their area which would review and set out future development needs, such as housing and roads, and proposals for meeting those needs. The Act simplified the planning landscape by making county councils and county boroughs solely responsible for planning. This reduced the number of planning authorities in Britain from 1441 to 145 as the smaller district and town councils lost their planning powers. In order to maintain the input from these smaller councils, the Act allowed the county planning authorities to devolve some planning powers to the smaller district councils. However, only the county planning authorities were able to raise funds for replanning and redevelopment and all schemes still had to be approved by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (MTCP). Joint authorities could also still be formed, as had been possible under the interwar planning acts, to allow for co-operative planning schemes across county borders.[588]

The Act gave local authorities wider powers of compulsory purchase as it allowed them to designate land required for development within the next ten years. Local authorities could also purchase larger amounts of land, as they were no longer

[587] Ibid; Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.1,* pp.239-240.
[588] Smith, 'Town and Country Planning Act 1947', p 74; Cherry, *Evolution of British Town Planning,* p.145.

required to purchase just land 'in an area of comprehensive development', but also any other land the authority had earmarked for a particular purpose to ensure its development according to the plan.[589] In addition to the wider powers of purchase, local authorities were extended a number of other powers to control land and building use. They could issue orders to desist development in order to protect landscapes, buildings and natural features and could also order the discontinuation of existing uses for buildings.[590] They were now empowered to order the demolition or alteration of any building on planning grounds, a clause which later caused some controversy when local authorities began demolishing standing property in order to build new road systems in the late 1950s and 1960s.[591]

A small but significant change was to public enquiries. Under the new Act, property owners had the right to request a public enquiry into any planning application which affected their property and the Minister of Town and Country Planning was obliged to hold the enquiry before confirming the planning order.[592] This differed from the 1944 Act which had made public enquiries mandatory for any planning scheme which required the compulsory purchase of land.[593] Within the existing planning literature the major public enquiries into post-war reconstruction plans are sometimes referred to as being 'forced' by traders and property owners or being a 'highly choreographed'

[589] Smith, Ibid. p.74.
[590] Town and Country Planning Act 1947, part 3, sections 26-33; Cherry, *Evolution of British Town Planning,* p.145.
[591] W.G Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter* (Chichester, revised ed. 2004), pp.142-143. See also pp.147-149 in Hazel Harvey's additional chapter in the revised ed.
[592] Smith, 'Town and Country Planning Act 1947, p.79; Town and Country Planning Act 1947, part 2, section 10 and part 10, section 104.
[593] TNA, IR 39/23, Second Report by Sub-Committee No.1 of the Interdepartmental Committee of Reconstruction' 1941, pp.6-7.

public show.[594] Articles appearing in the local press about traders calling for public enquiries, which can be found in the Exeter and Bristol papers, appear to support this view.[595] However, the major public enquiries into post-war reconstruction plans were held prior to the 1947 Act coming into force in July 1948 and the enquiries were instead held under the requirements of the 1944 Act. This is a subtle difference, but it does change the emphasis of the narrative of reconstruction. Within the traditional narrative, reconstruction plans were unpopular and forced upon a reluctant public with little consultation. The enquiries are held up as evidence of this, as traders and property owners had to 'force' an enquiry to have their views heard.[596] This was not the case for the majority of post-war reconstruction plans as the requirement for a public enquiry was written into the 1944 Act. Instead the local authority had to open up their schemes to scrutiny and objections to ensure that the views of all interested parties were heard and evaluated. This moved the narrative from one of 'top down' planners to a more inclusive and consultative process.

The 1947 Act also made better financial provisions for compulsory purchase of land, with loan relief grants of up to 90% of the loan charges made available to local authorities for the first five years of the loan and reduced relief for a further five years.[597] The dissolving of development rights also meant that the 'development value' of land was removed, which had the effect of steadying land prices as land

[594] Tait & While, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* 24/1, 2009, p.90; Essex and Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damage Plymouth 1941-1961: Devising and Defending a Modernist Agenda' in Clapson & Larkham (eds).
[595] *Western Daily Press,* 'Re-planning of Bristol', 6 April 1946; 'Central Area Layout', 10 April 1946; Letters to the Editor 'Fate of Broadmead', 11 April 1946.
[596] Tait & While, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', *Planning Perspectives,* 24/1, (2009), p.90; Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damage Plymouth 1941-1961: Devising and Defending a Modernist Agenda' in Clapson & Larkham (eds), *The Blitz and It's Legacy,* p.158.
[597] Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning,* pp.225-226.

would be sold at the 'current use value'.[598] As the inflation of land values through 'development value' would be neutralized, the Treasury was more comfortable with providing grants for land as planning would no longer cause a spike in land values.

The 1947 Act also changed the basis of compensation to blitzed property owners, allowing local authorities to acquire land and property at the current market value, rather than the 1939 value. Where a local plan required the compulsory acquisition of land, property could be acquired at market value, which was assessed as if the property was undamaged. In these circumstances a 'Converted Value Payment' was made, where the Value Payment which had been due to the property owner was diverted to the local authority to partially compensate them for the cost of purchase.[599] This tackled the grievance voiced by so many property owners that the 1939 standard did not reflect the increase in land values in the intervening years and partially solved the problem of the discrepancy between the Cost of Works and Value Payments. It did not entirely solve the problem, as some property owners still felt that they should have been entitled to Cost of Works payments and were unhappy at the terms of leases being offered. Exeter provides an example of the problems with local authorities still faced, with one trader who was due a payment of £45,000 for their site stating that with that money he would 'leave the city and so would any trader who would not put money into a leasehold property'.[600] The payment of market value did not guarantee that traders would be willing to rebuild on new sites.

The 1947 Act represented a radical shift in both planning and property legislation, with all subsequent planning legislation taking its cue from the principles of the 1947 Act. The questions of land ownership and land values had been under consideration

[598] Town and Country Planning Act 1947, part 5, section 50.
[599] Ibid.
[600] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948.

since the mid-nineteenth century, particularly by the Liberals, as land represented the basis of much wealth and income which went virtually untaxed. Land taxes of varying sorts were under discussion from the 1880s onwards and the question of land values and ownership continued throughout the interwar period. [601] Both the Liberal and Labour parties had pursued ideas about land taxes during the interwar period, with the Labour party eventually advocating the nationalisation of land.[602]

The absolute rights of landowners over development had caused a myriad of problems with urban sprawl and industrial development throughout the interwar period, which were only partially solved by the various planning acts of the period. As discussed in Chapter One, landowners could develop their land however they saw fit, regardless of the suitability of the development or the needs of the area. The planning acts of the interwar years had not solved this problem, as development was only restricted where a planning scheme was in operation; outside of the schemes boundaries, there were no restrictions on development. The 1935 Restriction of Ribbon Development Act had attempted to curb urban sprawl outside of planning schemes, but again only tackled part of the problem. In addition to this, local authorities were also liable to pay compensation to a landowner when development was refused. This onerous burden on local authorities made them reluctant to restrict development even where they could. The 1947 Act removed all of these problems by dissolving development rights and removing the right to compensation when planning permission was refused. This represented a major shift in the way land ownership was viewed, as property rights had been seen as sacrosanct; an Englishman had

[601] Brian Lund, *Housing Politics in the United Kingdom: Power, planning and protest* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2016), pp.34-36
[602] Lund, *Housing Politics in the United Kingdom,* pp.37-38; Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The debate on economic planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.108

complete liberty over his property. The removal of this complete liberty represented a shift away from individualism towards land as a public commodity, to be used and developed according to the public good. This may well have been seen as the first step towards both land nationalisation and the dissolving of private property, particularly as the Labour Party manifesto of 1945 stated that the party believed in land nationalisation and would work toward this aim. The 1947 Act with its wider powers of public acquisition of land and stance of the Labour Party with its programme of nationalisation for industry and transport would have reinforced the fears of property owners and traders.

A further clause of the 1947 Act levied a development, or 'betterment' charge on all land development. This charge was set at 100% of the increase in value stemming from development and was again considered a radical step. The idea of the development charge was not new, with the Land Tax of 1910 representing an early attempt to tax increases in land value, but had not been seriously pursued since. The betterment charge was intended to insure that the public benefitted from the increases in land values produced by development, but was considered a disincentive to develop, with the National Federation of Property Owners stating it was 'the greatest ever deterrent to the development of building and industry'.[603]

However, the Central Land Board noted that after initial difficulties, the system worked well and producing a good return. The development charge was also not applicable to building undertaken in reconstruction zones resulting from war damage, and was not therefore applicable to any of the reconstruction undertaken in the three

[603] As quoted in Lund, *Housing Politics in the United Kingdom,* p.48

cities.[604] Despite this, the reconstruction and the restrictions placed on building by central government and the 1947 Act were viewed as an attack on private property and enterprise, as expressed by some traders and property owners in the three cities.

The changes brought in by the 1947 Act caused some problems for blitzed cities in terms of acquiring land. Initially the three cities had applied for permission to buy land under the 1944 Act, but all actually acquired it under the 1947 Act. The differences between the two acts, such as the right to acquire blitzed land and the right to acquire land for planning purposes, sometimes caused conflict between the Councils and the MTCP. The economic problems of 1947 caused further conflict, particularly in Bristol, as the MTCP came under pressure from the Treasury to curtail land purchases. As a result, the three cities found themselves having to defend their plans afresh to the Ministry and parts of all three plans were cut as cost-saving measures.

Despite the public enquiries being held in the spring and early summer of 1946, the three cities did not know whether their declaratory areas for land, or their plans as a whole, would be approved by the MTCP. The reluctance of the MTCP to approve plans and to grant CPOs helped delay the commencement of reconstruction work in all blitzed cities, with objections being raised to most plans from mid-1946 onwards. This often came as a surprise to the blitzed cities, as prior to this the MTCP had been supportive of the majority of plans. Plymouth and Bristol were both subject to Ministry objections and their plans were not officially approved until 1947, and even then reluctantly. The cities also seem to have been caught between the MTCP

[604] Town and Country Planning Act 1947, part VIII, section 83

and the Treasury, which was applying pressure on the MTCP to reduce the cost of reconstruction by not approving CPOs.

The three cities had all applied for Declaratory Area Orders in 1945 and 1946, outlining the land required for their reconstruction schemes. The public enquiries of 1946 had examined both the plans and the Orders to test whether the land requested was necessary to the plans, and that the plans were fit for purpose. Both Exeter and Plymouth were granted their full Declaratory Areas Orders, while Bristol had its Declaratory Area cut by around a third.[605]

Bristol City Council had applied for a very large Declaratory Area Order of 771 acres, plus two CPOs for central areas land. The Declaratory Area covered nearly the whole of the centre of the city, on the basis that the war damage was widespread, and this had led to accusations from traders and property owners that the City Council was effecting a 'land grab', as they felt that the Act did not allow for such a large area of land to be bought. They suggested that only 67 acres of land in the very heart of the city could be considered 'blitzed' and that only these should be acquired. [606] The MTCP trod a middle line, upholding the objection that not all of the land applied for was war damaged and consenting to only around a third of the original Declaratory Order.[607] The areas excluded from the orders were considered not to be 'areas of extensive war damage' and therefore were not subject to the process laid out in the 1944 Act, with the Ministry suggested that the Council could apply for the

[605] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: Minute 122, Central Areas Reconstruction Scheme Declaratory Area, 18 December 1946; *Western Morning News,* 'Compulsory Purchase Order for Exeter', 6 December 1946; 'Plymouth Given Order for City Centre', 8 October 1946.
[606] *Western Daily Press,* 'City Planning Denounced', 22 June 1946.
[607] *Western Daily Press* 'Bristol Plan 'cut' by Ministry', 19 December 1946.

rest of the land under the forthcoming 1947 Act.[608] The CPOs became an ongoing problem for the City Council as they attempted to convince the MTCP of the necessity of the whole application being granted in order to carry out their plans. The main reason the City Council was anxious to acquire all the land for their proposed city centre reconstruction plan was trader opposition to the Broadmead scheme. Traders had made it clear that they would only accept the plan to move the shopping centre to Broadmead and convert the current shopping area to a civic centre if the scheme was carried out as a whole.[609] They were not prepared to see a piecemeal scheme which would result in traders having to move sites to then see their original site returned to retail purposes. The 1947 Act would allow the Council to acquire all the land needed for the whole reconstruction scheme as the Act made provision for local authorities to acquire all the land required for planning purposes as laid out in a comprehensive development plan.[610]

However, the Act contained the stipulation that land thus earmarked must be acquired within ten years of the plan being adopted. This particular clause was interpreted by the MTCP to mean that land must be acquired *and* developed within ten years, which put blitzed cities like Bristol in a difficult position. The Treasury and the MTCP made it clear to Bristol that they thought it unlikely that blitzed cities would be able to rebuild within the next eight years, and therefore the use of the 1947 Act to acquire land for reconstruction was impossible.[611] Bristol may have been an unusual

[608] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Planning Position', 16 January 1947; BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'Appendix B to minute No. 768 of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee held on 23h July 1947 – Central Areas Reconstruction: Deputation to the Minister...22nd July 1947, p.2.
[609] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'Appendix 'A' to minute No. 724 of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee held on 16th July 1947'; *Western Daily Press,* 'Retailers Say Wine St Plan 'futile'', 20 August 1947.
[610] Town and Country Planning Act 1947 (London: HMSO, 1947), part 2, section 5.
[611] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'Appendix 'A' to minute no.525 of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee of 1st May 1947 – Central Areas Reconstruction Scheme', p.1.

case, but the city does highlight the problems that blitzed cities faced with planning legislation and the attitude of the MTCP throughout the 1940s.

The granting of the Declaratory Areas was only the first step toward rebuilding, with Compulsory Purchase Orders needing to be granted to allow the acquisition of land. The three cities had applied for the first of these in mid-1946 and had all hoped to see them granted swiftly once the MTCP had made its decisions on the Declaratory Areas. However, the process of granting CPOs was far from smooth, with all three cities encountering objections from the Ministry to their overall plans. As both Plymouth and Bristol had originally been praised by the Ministry for their plans, and thought they had their support, this came as a shock. In Exeter's case, the objections were to specific aspects of the plans rather that the overall vision for the city, which made revisions simpler. Throughout 1947 the three cities worked to have their plans approved by the MTCP, a process which slowed reconstruction and frustrated the councils and citizens alike.

Plymouth was the first city nationally to have its plan approved in August 1947, sixteen months after the public enquiry of 1946. The MTCP had internally raised concerns about the *Plan for Plymouth* in April 1946, shortly before the city's public enquiry had been held.[612] The timing of the objections suggests that it may have been a review of the plan ahead of the enquiry which first aroused concern at the scope, and cost, of the *Plan for Plymouth.* The enquiry did not allay those fears, as the MTCP and the Ministry of Transport called a meeting with Plymouth City Council in December 1946 to discuss concerns about the road layouts and the size of the

[612] Hasegawa, 'The Attitudes of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Towards Blitzed Cities in 1940s Britain', *Planning Perspectives,* 28/2 (2013), p.282.

shopping centre. The Ministry of Transport was unhappy with the proposed road width of 175 feet for the new north-south axis road, which they felt was excessive, while the MTCP felt that the Council had over-allocated land for shopping purposes. Both of these concerns were also raised by local trade groups and the reduction in road widths has previously been attributed to their objections. [613] The supposed over-allocation of the shopping district had been raised at the public enquiry, but the need to re-site businesses from the Devonport shopping district due to the expansion of the Dockyard had been overlooked.[614] The two Ministries continued to raise these objections well into 1947 before eventually approving the plan in August 1947 after the City Council had agreed to narrow the north-south axis road.

The approval was similar to that which was later given to Bristol, in that it was worded more as an acceptance that the Council could proceed as it wished, despite the Ministry's misgivings and better judgement. The long period of objections and the reluctant approval of the plan was at odds with the MTCPs approval of the first two of Plymouth's CPOs, which were approved in October 1946, ten months before the Ministry approved the plan.[615] It is unclear why they chose to allow Plymouth to proceed with the compulsory purchase of land, only to object to the plan itself two months later. There is some suggestion, however, that the Ministry was coming under pressure from other government departments to curtail or delay reconstruction, as they began regularly to raise objections to reconstruction plans from the end of 1946. The case of Bristol demonstrates this more clearly, as there the Council specifically attributes the objections to their plan to the Treasury.

[613] Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damage Plymouth 1941-1961', p.159.
[614] Gill, *Plymouth: A new history,* p.202 ; Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.70.
[615] *Western Morning News*; 'Plymouth Given Order for City Centre' 8 October 1946; 'Public Notices: City of Plymouth Town and Country Planning Act 1944 City of Plymouth (City Centre) Compulsory Purchase Order No.1 1946', 29 October 1946.

Bristol found itself in a similar situation to Plymouth, with the MTCP suddenly raising objections to their plan in December 1946 and curtailing the declaratory order to a third of the land requested.[616] Prior to this, the Minister himself, Lewis Silkin, had indicated that the Ministry was satisfied with Bristol's plan and they would be given permission to proceed shortly, so the sudden change in attitude came as a shock to the Council.[617] At a meeting between Council and MTCP representatives on 10th February 1947, the Ministry indicated a number of aspects of Bristol's plan it was unhappy with, many of which were similar in character to those raised at Plymouth. The Ministry of Transport was unhappy with the road proposals, while the MTCP objected to the relocation of the shopping centre and the proposed redevelopment of Wine Street as a Civic Centre. As with Plymouth, the MTCP felt that the Council had over-allocated land for retail use, and the Broadmead area was unnecessary as a result.[618] At the same time, the Ministry indicated that they were not prepared to allow the purchase of large parcels of land by Bristol City Council, as they felt that the land could not be developed in the near future, and therefore the Council did not need to acquire it.[619]

This ran against the Council's interpretation of the 1944 Act and the previous Ministry advice of 'plan boldly', which had suggested that councils should acquire city centre land in one parcel in order to undertake comprehensive rather than piecemeal reconstruction. Bristol City Council felt that the Ministry's attitude was forcing them

[616] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Plan 'Cut' by Ministry', 19 December 1946; BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: Minute No.322, 18 December 1946.
[617] Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre,* p.92.
[618] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'City Engineers memorandum of conference...to discuss matters arising out of the planning and reconstruction of the Bristol Central Area' 10 February 1947.
[619] Ibid.

back to the piecemeal solution, something which was further underlined in April 1947 when their CPO application for land at Bedminster for a trading estate was also severely curtailed from 22 to 5 acres.[620] This would restrict the planned relocation and expansion of some of Bristol's industries from the city centre, which in turn would have an impact on the relocation of the shopping centre to Broadmead. As with Plymouth, the Ministry stated in March 1947 that they would not raise any further objections to the Broadmead plan if the city was determined to execute it.[621] However, the MTCP was still unhappy with the Councils proposed use of the Wine Street area and insisted on two further public enquiries into the CPOs for the area, preventing any progress until 1949.[622]

The Planning and Reconstruction Committee ascribed the Ministry's change in attitude toward planning to Treasury pressure;

"It seemed evident that Treasury interests rather than planning interests were going to control any action that could be taken locally in the immediate future, and that because of this there would be no great enthusiasm at the London level to approve any plan for the central area at this stage, but rather to play a delaying action by raising point after point, each involving further research, further plans and further discussion"[623]

[620] *Western Daily Press,* 'Another Bristol Plan Cut', 13 June 1947; M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'Appendix 'B' to minute no.768 of 23 July 1947 Central Areas Reconstruction – Deputation to Minister 22 July 1947', p.4.
[621] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: Minute 423, 26th March 1947.
[622] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: Minute 487; *Western Daily Press* 7 March 1949 – no headline, tiny notice on front page, col.4 under 'To Act for Earl Baldwin'.
[623] BRO, BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'City Engineers memorandum of conference...to discuss matters arising out of the planning and reconstruction of the Bristol Central Area' 10 February 1947, p.3.

This position was further underlined in July 1947, when the Planning and Reconstruction Committee again emphasised the Treasury involvement in refusing the city's CPOs and proposed plans.[624] The Treasury was responsible for the loans which were available to blitzed cities for purchasing land for reconstruction. More importantly, blitzed cities were also entitled to relief on the interest for the first ten years of the loan, which the Treasury bore the cost of. It seems that as a result the Treasury was reluctant to see large CPOs granted to blitzed cities owing to the cost. The refusal to allow large CPOs or a CPO for land which could not be developed quickly was a partial solution to this problem. Bristol had initially been denied the CPO for the blitzed land at Wine Street, as the proposed civic buildings would not be approved for many years. As such it was judged as land which could not be developed within ten years, was therefore non-essential to the city plan and did not need to be acquired at the present time.

By restricting what local authorities could acquire to 'manageable' pieces of land which were capable of development within ten years, the Treasury could restrict its expenditure on loans and loan relief. This curtailment of expenditure was part of the wider economic picture and reflected the worsening financial and economic climate of Britain from 1947. The delays in granting CPOs were part of the reduction in spending seen from August 1947, as without a CPO local authorities could not acquire city centre land and building could not progress.

The MTCP and the Ministry of Transport also raised objections to specific aspects of the reconstruction plans, with features of all three plans falling to the axe of government spending. In addition to cost-cutting measures, new restrictions on

[624] BRO, BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: 'At A Special Meeting of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee held on 16th July 1947 – Central Areas Reconstruction'.

building and the demolition of standing property came into effect in 1947 which stated that no building less than 30 years old which was still capable of use could be demolished.[625] At the same time the demolition of housing capable of use was prohibited, as the housing crisis was still acute and cuts to labour and spending were reducing the completion rate of new houses.

This shift in policy created problems for all three cities and changed aspects of their plans, with only Plymouth's plan remaining mostly intact. The line of Exeter's new pedestrian way had to be altered due to the Exeter Co-Operative Building on the corner of Paris Street and High Street which fell within the 30 year rule, having been built in 1937.[626] The building blocked the end of the proposed pedestrian way and prevented it from opening out onto a proposed new city square. The retention of this building has previously been attributed to the Co-Operative pressuring the City Council, but the records reveal that it had to be retained under the new guidelines.[627] Likewise in Plymouth a car showroom and the Odeon cinema both had to be retained as they were less than 30 years old, altering the plan around them. The car showroom was eventually marooned in a car park.[628] The offices of the *Western Morning News* also had to be incorporated into the new plan, altering the building line of New George Street.[629]

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[625] DHC, 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 Dr Schwartz's report & CARS File No.1 – Central Areas Reconstruction: 'Report of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Conference on Reconstruction Problems, 23rd and 24th October 1947', p.4.
[626] Devon & Exeter Institution, Exeter Co-Operative and Industrial Society Limited, 'Souvenir of the New Central Premises, opened June 19th 1937',
[627] Tait and While, 'Exeter and the Question of Thomas Sharp's Physical Legacy', p.82 ; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Planning Committee, 22 June 1948.
[628] BBC 'Help Building Tell its Story', 2 December 2009 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/devon/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8390000/8390393.stm accessed on 25/5/2018.
[629] PWDRO, 1673/12 Plymouth Reconstruction File: Compulsory Purchase Order No.2 1946-1947: Letter from the District Valuer to the Inland Revenue re draft compulsory purchase order no.2, 15 August 1946; 'Town and Country Planning Act 1944: Public inquiry...into the Plymouth Corporation's application for confirmation of a compulsory purchase order affecting certain lands in the area declared by the Minister by the City of Plymouth (City Centre) Declaratory Order 1946 to be subject to compulsory purchase', p.2.

In Bristol, the decision not to approve the full CPO for the proposed Bedminster trading estate may also have been due to the new demolition rules, as the site included housing. Bristol City Council had earmarked the houses for slum clearance, but the MTCP stated that the houses were fit for habitation and should not be demolished.[630] This decision slightly pre-dates the restrictions on demolition, so cannot be directly attributed to them, but the concern about housing shortages certainly appears to have been a factor and the Ministry may have been acting in accordance with Ministry of Health advice ahead of the new restrictions.

Roads were often the most prominent victim of government retrenchment due to the large subsidies for road building provided by Ministry of Transport. The focus on industrial reconstruction meant that railway and trunk road improvement were more of a priority than city ring roads, as an improved national transport system was a benefit to industry and economy in a way urban roads were not.[631] As a result, road plans were often pruned to make them cheaper to build and maintain.

Exeter's proposed city-centre bypass was the victim of Ministry cuts to road expenditure, with the route for the bypass proving too technical and expensive. Sharp's bypass route around the northern side of the city centre ran along a steep valley next to the London and South Western Railway lines into Central Station, where it would dip under Queen Street, and continue steeply down to the river to join the major river crossing.[632] The route would have involved building tunnels, demolishing much standing property and creating several major interchanges. The

[630] WDP 'Another Bristol Plan Cut', 13 June 1947; M/BCC/PREC/1/2 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 20th Nov 1946 – 22nd Oct 1947: ''A' Appendix to minute no.724 of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee Held on 16th July 1947 – Reconstruction proposals of Bristol City Council. Memorandum on the Present Position', p.2.
[631] TNA, CAB 129/29/23, 'Receipts and Expenditure of the British Transport Commission: Memorandum by the Minister of Transport' 10 August 1948.
[632] Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix*, pp.75-76

City Engineer initially expressed some disquiet over the proposed route, which he felt would be difficult to build and costly to maintain, and he redesigned some aspects of it in 1946.[633] The Ministry of Transport was cautiously supportive of the scheme, but also expressed concern at the cost and difficulty of the proposed route.[634] They suggested an alternative route to the south of the city centre utilising the existing street of Southernhay, which would be easier and cheaper to develop. However, Southernhay was the largest remaining Georgian part of the city and the City Council was keen to preserve it. They identified an area of undeveloped land behind Southernhay which had been protected from development by a planning scheme pre-war, and suggested an alternative route through it to the Ministry, who accepted it.[635]

The need to save money and resources was ultimately the main driver in re-routing the bypass, with the new route also rendering a proposed new square superfluous in the Ministry's opinion. The square was originally designed as a traffic interchange for the bypass; without the bypass the Ministry felt that a simple crossroads would suffice and refused to pay for the square. [636] As a result, two major features of the Sharp plan, the square and the northern bypass, were removed. The changes to Bristol and Plymouth's road plans were often indirectly achieved via the refusal of CPOs for the necessary land, but still achieved the aim of reducing costs.

The restrictions on demolishing buildings and on expenditure also altered the three cities' proposals for public and civic buildings. The development of theatres, public halls and civic buildings was not permitted until the late 1950s, and then only under

[633] DHC, Exeter City Council Replanning Committee Minutes January 1943-December 1946, 18 February 1946; 20 February 1946; 25 February 1946.
[634] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Planning Committee Special Meeting – Inner By-Pass Road, 10 February 1949.
[635] DHC, 5871 City Planning Officers Files Box 1: 'Report of the Proposed Inner By-Pass Road', February 1949, p.6.
[636] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Planning Committee, 26 July 1949.

special circumstances. Plans for new theatres featured in both Exeter and Plymouth's plans, while the revised plan for the Wine Street area in Bristol included a new swimming pool and library. All three cities proposed new public halls for concerts and public meetings, and Bristol and Exeter also wanted to build new museums. The restrictions on spending ensured that none of these buildings emerged in the post-war era, with many of the plans dropped entirely. Exeter's theatre plan was a further victim of the revised bypass route, as the original northern route would have necessitated the demolition of the existing Theatre Royal. The new southern route spared the existing building, but ensured that the new theatre was not forthcoming. In all three cities the demolition of property was hotly debated, with objections to the demolition of standing property coming from local people as well as being contested by government.[637] It was, however, the restrictions on demolition that ensured that some buildings remained standing and ensured that the new public buildings could be refused on both cost and current provision grounds.

The economic crises of the late 1940s were therefore the main factor in changes to city centre reconstruction plans and the long delays in starting building. The Treasury's need to restrict expenditure made them reluctant to see CPOs granted in blitzed cities, which stalled the progress of reconstruction. Likewise, the same need saw the Ministry of Transport refuse permission for road schemes, resulting in significant changes to reconstruction plans. Similar issues to those of Bristol and Exeter were seen in Southampton, Portsmouth, Coventry and Hull, were objections to road schemes and refusals of CPOs similarly curtailed or changed plans.[638] At the same time, restrictions on labour and materials meant that even if blitzed cities had

[637] *Western Morning News,* 'Stop Demolitions and Get on With Building' 2 December 1947.
[638] Hasegawa, 'Attitude of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Towards Blitzed Cities in 1940s Britain', pp.273-278; Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour politics,* pp.37-38.

their plans and CPOs approved, they were still unable to obtain the necessary resources to begin building.

Negotiation of Leases and the Commencement of Building

The process of allocating sites and negotiating leases was sometimes fraught, as there were still difficulties with finance for building and the setting of rents for sites. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act had revised the values at which local authorities could acquire property to current market levels, but there was still no additional financial aid for rebuilding. There had also been no revision of the compensation payments, as owners still could not claim a Cost of Works payment if they were forced to move sites. The bitterness felt at the loss of freeholds was still present, with the payment of current values little comfort to property owners.[639]

The leases themselves caused some bad feeling, as local authorities were required to set ground rents at current market values which some traders and trade groups felt added insult to injury. Traders had initially been led to believe that those affected by bombing would be afforded a low rent in recognition of their suffering, so the combination of market-level rents and leasehold tenure caused some anger as blitzed traders felt they were bearing an unreasonable financial burden in reconstruction.[640] In Exeter, the immediate commencement of rent payments once a lease was completed caused particular bad feeling as lessees would be unable to build in the foreseeable future. As such, they were paying rent on sites which were

[639] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948.
[640] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group1 1948-1950, Letter from MTCP to Lloyd's Bank re rent, 21 February 1950; 5897 City Architects Papers Box 24 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group 2, May 1949-March 1951, Notes of a meeting regarding terms of building agreement and ground lease, 4 October 1949.

not producing an income.[641] The City Council explained that it too was paying charges on unproductive sites, as they were liable for loan repayments as soon as they site was acquired, not when it became productive; the argument was not appreciated.[642]

Despite the difficulties of finance and rents, leases for the major city centre sites were agreed by 1949 in Exeter and Plymouth and by 1950 in Bristol. Building work commenced in Plymouth in 1947 and in Exeter in 1949 with the laying of the new streets. The end of 1949 also saw the first small allocations of building materials to blitzed cities, and the erection of new buildings began in earnest in 1950. Bristol was slightly slower off the mark, owing to the ongoing problems with MTCP objections to their plans, but building commenced in 1951. All three cities also built and let temporary shops prior to 1950, providing much-needed retail accommodation in the city centres.

The allocation of sites had been discussed since the blitz in all three cities, with traders wanting assurances that they would be offered sites close to their original ones.[643] In Bristol this was not possible with the shifting of the shopping centre to Broadmead, but Plymouth and Exeter City Councils attempted to meet this request as far as possible.

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[641] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948; DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central areas reconstruction group 1, 2 & 3: Letter from the Ministry of Town and Country Planning to Lloyd's Bank re rent, 21 February 1950; Letter from Burton's to Town Clerk re disposals and rent, 30 March 1950; Letter from Town Clerk to Burton's re disposals and rent, 1 April 1950.

[642] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central areas reconstruction group 1, 2 & 3: Letter from Town Clerk to Burton's re disposals and rent, 1 April 1950.

[643] DHC, 5872 City Planning Office's papers Box 2 - Town & Country Planning Act 1944 public enquiry: 'Proceedings at a Local Public Enquiry held at the Guildhall on Tuesday 9th July 1946', p.32; *Western Morning News,* 'Replanning Plymouth' 30 January 1942.

In Exeter this was more easily achieved, as the street pattern was not hugely altered and traders could be kept within the vicinity of their original site. Exeter City Council's experiences in negotiating sites and leases demonstrate many of the problems which local authorities faced and the ways in which they were handled. The city also challenges some of the accepted narratives regarding the place of multiple stores and finance companies in reconstruction. There is a perception that city centre leases were only affordable for 'big business' as the larger concerns were prepared to pay high rents in order to secure prime sites, forcing rents beyond the means of the smaller traders.[644] This narrative has evidently arisen from the predominance of national concerns as eventual builders of reconstructed cities, which gives the impression that multiples and finance companies dominated the new city centres. However, the actual process of offering sites to potential lessees and the shift in tenure seen in all city centres post-war present a different view.

All three cities kept a record of which businesses were bombed out and set out to accommodate all such businesses within their new city centres. They also surveyed blitzed traders about their post-war needs, although not all traders responded, and an initial site plans was drawn up in against the stated space requirements. Since many traders had stated that they would require bigger sites post-war, the new city centres took account of this, hence the expanded centres and the decision to move Bristol's shopping area to Broadmead. The three cities also gave blitzed traders priority in site allocations, with pre-war city traders getting next priority for any vacant or refused

[644] This is a perception the author has encountered when giving talks on this subject to local history groups and organisations. Audiences always ask questions about the influence of 'big business' and cite the role that they perceive was played by such concerns in shaping the post-war High Street. It is not encountered so often in the literature, but there is a sense that much of it is trying to overcome such perceptions.

sites, and incoming firms only being offered sites once all existing traders had been dealt with.

Exeter drew up such an allocation plan in 1946 ahead of the public enquiry and evidently circulated it to the blitzed traders, as traders knew where they were to be offered sites under the new city centre layout. [645] The banks, Marks and Spencer, the traders on the north side of the High Street and several local department stores all lodged objections based on the proposed sites, concerned at proposed 'zoning' of business as well as the loss of their freehold sites.[646] The High Street traders had put forward their own plan for rebuilding as a group in order to preserve their freeholds, but the traders in this group also felt that the sites offered were not large enough for their needs. Other concerns were the proposed grouping of businesses, the prominence of sites and the proximity to pre-war sites.[647] Exeter City Council took these concerns seriously and traders were offered other sites which might better suit their needs. This proved to be an ongoing process as changes were made to the site plan over the whole lifespan of the reconstruction process.

The Council was also careful to keep the promise made to blitzed traders that they would be offered sites close to their former location as far as was possible.[648] Traders were free to turn down the offered sites if they felt they were not suitable and the Council would try to find a more suitable site within the replanned city. One such example was the Devon and Somerset Stores, which had traded on the north side of the High Street pre-war. The City Council offered them a site close to their original

[645] DHC, Report of a local public enquiry held at the Guildhall, Exeter, on Wednsday 10th July 1946, p.40.
[646] DHC, Report of a local public enquiry at...Exeter..10th July 1946, pp 30-48; 11th July 1946, pp.13-21.
[647] Ibid, 9th July 1946, pp. 47-48; 10th July 1946, p.30; 11th July 1946 p.21.
[648] See correspondence with firms in DHC, Exeter City Council City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950 for examples.

location, but Devon and Somerset Stores turned it down as they did not wish to construct a new building on a leasehold site, stating that it was too expensive to do so.[649] The Stores stated that they wanted to find new freehold premises and therefore would not require Exeter City Council to find them an alternative site. Sites which were turned down in this way were then offered to another blitzed trader and if a lessee could not be found from the pool of blitzed traders, it was offered to other businesses which were looking to relocate, a process repeated in Bristol and Plymouth.

Many blitzed traders, like the Devon and Somerset Stores, did not want to build their own premises, but were happy to rent a shop built by another company. The local firms of Bruford's and Wheaton's were two such examples, both of which had also occupied sites on the north side of the High Street. In this case, two large firms, Lloyd's Bank and Burton's, were found who were willing to build additional shops to let as well as their own premises and these were offered to Bruford's and Wheaton's.[650] This pattern was repeated along the High Street, with large firms becoming responsible for erecting 'groups' of new buildings along the street, with the additional shops let to smaller firms. This building of additional shops to let by large firms, for those who either could not afford to build, or preferred not to, was repeated in all three cities.

A similar process was undertaken in Plymouth and Bristol, although in these cities the changes to the shopping centres meant that different methods had to be employed in positioning businesses within the site plans. Plymouth found a novel way

[649] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group1 1948-1950, Letter from Ware & Sons to Town Clerk re leases, 3 November 1948.
[650] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, correspondence with potential lessees.

of allocating sites to traders in the new layout, which would echo the attempts to keep existing communities together during the slum clearances of the 1950s and 1960s. The City Council allocated sites based on the location of whole streets in the old city. As such, those who had been located in George Street were allocated sites together in New George Street, while those who had been on Bedford Street were allocated sites in on Royal Parade and so on.[651] This pattern was repeated across the whole of the new street layout, with some changes made for 'anchor' stores.[652] The 'anchor' stores were generally the larger multiple traders, such as Woolworths, and the major department stores, such as Spooner's. These were offered large sites on major intersections or on strategic central sites on the main streets, with the aim that they would act as a draw for shoppers, bringing footfall onto streets and ensuring that the other businesses would be given exposure as a result.[653]

Bristol City Council took a similar approach with 'anchor' stores, but did not use the same method of allocation on a 'street by street' basis. Instead they allocated more according to complementary business types, grouping together similar types of shops.[654] This approach in itself is interesting, as blitzed cities often 'zoned' for use, including for different types of retail, in their original plans. Exeter's plan also had similar types of business grouped together, with banks and insurance companies 'zoned' away from the main High Street to keep it just for retail purposes.[655] Sharp had recommended that Sidwell Street be reserved for multiple traders and department stores, as he thought that they would want large sites and felt that these

[651] Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961, p. 159.
[652] Ibid, pp.159-160.
[653] Ibid, p.159; Essex & Brayshay, 'Boldness Diminished', pp.456-457.
[654] Mike Jenner, 'The Origin of the Broadmead Shopping Centre', in *Post-War Bristol 1945-1965: Twenty Years That Changed the City* (Bristol Historical Association, 2000), pp.18-19.
[655] DHC, Report of a local public enquiry at...Exeter..10th July 1946, pp 30-48; 11th July 1946, pp.13-21; Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* pp.100-101.

could best be created there, while small sites for specialist traders could be created in the new pedestrian way. The removal of such zoning in many post-war plans has been attributed to trader pressure, for example with Exeter's Sidwell Street zoning which stores such as Marks and Spencer and the local department stores of Bobby's and Colson's had been unhappy with.[656] Tait and While attributed the dropping of the multiple trader proposal to the need to appease such firms because their trade was considered vital to the city's future prosperity and rateable value.[657] However, zoning was in fact another victim of government guidelines, with blitzed cities advised not to heavily zone the new centres according to use.[658] The Sidwell Street proposal was dropped, and heavy zoning elsewhere was relaxed in Exeter's plan as a result. The survival of such use zoning in Bristol is therefore interesting, as it suggests that there was some flexibility in the MTCP guidelines. It is not clear how zonings were regulated, but Bristol's use of them offers a window for further research into how the allocation of sites was decided upon and controlled, furthering our understanding of how city centres were shaped in the post-war era.

The allocation of sites was usually the more difficult aspect of the process, as there were many factors which could affect how a business thought of a site. The proximity of rivals, proximity to their former site, footfall, visibility to passing trade, size and traffic all played a part in defining how desirable a site was for a business. Once these aspects could be reasonably satisfied, the signing of the lease appears to have been mostly a matter of formality. However, Exeter does provide some examples of additional difficulties that a local authority could face in terms of settling leases. The

[656] DHC, 'Report of a local public enquiry at...Exeter..10th July 1946', pp 30-48; 11th July 1946, pp.13-21.
[657] Tait and While, 'Exeter and the Question of Sharp's Physical Legacy', pp.82 & 92.
[658] DHC, 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22, File No.1 C.A.R.S: Ministry of Town and Country Planning Conference on Reconstruction Problems 23-24 October 1947, p.6.

City Council had great difficulty with some of its potential tenants, most notably Burton's and Lloyd's Bank, who made repeated objections to both sites and the terms of the leases. To a lesser extent, Barclay's Bank and Bobby's, a department store, also proved tricky to deal with, but for different reasons.

Burton's and Lloyd's Bank proved to be extremely difficult to deal with and repeatedly tried to derail Exeter's replanning scheme for their own ends; they were later found to be colluding with each other in order to do so.[659] There is some evidence that many local authorities found Burton's difficult to deal with as they were keen to press their own specific architectural branding onto Britain's high streets.[660] The firm had its own in-house architects and had created a specific architectural style for the stores during the interwar period. References to the poor taste and style of this architecture can be found in both local and national records and as a result local authorities were keen to control what Burton's built in their city centres.[661] In contrast, relations with Lloyd's appear to have been fairly amicable in other cities compared with Exeter. There is some minor evidence that this reflects the level of autonomy which regional managers were given by Lloyd's, as the difficulties in rebuilding presented by the Exeter manager do not appear to be repeated in either Bristol or Plymouth.[662]

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[659] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Notes of Meeting between estate manager of Mssrs M Burton Ltd and Mr Shears of Messrs Healy and Baker and the Deputy Town clerk, Consultant Estate Surveyor & Estate Surveyor, Central Areas Reconstruction Scheme – Disposals: Messrs Montague Burton Ltd 24 February 1950.

[660] Gill, *Plymouth: A new history* p.204.

[661] DHC, 5896 City Architect's Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Notes re elevation control for Burtons, undated c.1949; TNA, IR39/23, Redevelopment of Bombed Central Areas, Memo by the Ministry of Health, March 1941, p.2.

[662] Lloyds Archive, HO/D/Pre/34.0, Premises committee Minute Book No.34 1946-1960(C2818) – entries suggest that reconstruction process was more straightforward in Bristol and Plymouth as leases offered and accepted quickly. See minute 1578 'Exeter, Devon (proposed district office)' 2 December 1949 and 3062 'Plymouth Devonshire' 18 June 1954 for examples of difference of approach.

The initial problems were connected to the terms of the 1944 Act and the compensation available to blitzed traders. Both Burton's and Lloyd's were reluctant to move from their original sites as they would lose the right to Cost of Works payments and would lose their freeholds. Lloyd's also cited the expense of building new strongrooms on a new site. This complaint was taken up by Barclays Bank as well, which had also been offered a different site. The two banks argued that new strongrooms would require a lot of steel, which was in short supply, and therefore it was wasteful to move the two banks and make them build new strongrooms.[663] In the case of Barclays, not moving the bank would have changed the lines of several streets and upset a large portion of the reconstruction plan. The junction which the two banks sat on opposite corners of was acknowledged as dangerous for traffic and pedestrians pre-war. The relaying of the street was partially to relieve this problem, making the City Council reluctant to grant permission for the banks to stay on their pre-war sites. [664]

Burton's also wished to retain their original site on compensation and ownership grounds, going as far as offering to buy back their original site from the Council in 1950 for the sum of £5000, a much lower price than Exeter City Council paid for it in 1946.[665] The main reason Burton's wanted the freehold was to put the site outside the control of the Council, as with so many other traders. This would allow them to build according to their own architectural branding rather than the design prescribed

[663] DHC, 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 - File No.1 C.A.R.S: Letter from F Pritchard (Lloyd's Bank premises secretary) to Mr Proper of the MTCP, 7 January 1949.
[664] DHC 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 - Dr Schwartz's report & CARS File No.2 Central Areas Reconstruction: Letter from Blaise Gille, MTCP, to Lloyd's re strongroom objections, 31 January 1949.
[665] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Burton's to Town Clerk re disposals and site, 30 March 1950; Letter from Town Clerk to Burton's re disposals and site, 1 April 1950.

by the City Council under the reconstruction scheme.[666] The City Council were not willing to contemplate such as arrangement, as it would set a precedent and could act as a catalyst for the unravelling of the plan.[667]

All three firms lodged complaints with the MTCP, requesting that section 19 of the 1944 planning act be invoked which allowed the MTCP to force local authorities to allow property owners to return to their sites.[668] The MTCP ruled that Exeter City Council's plans were reasonable and the traffic basis of changing the street layout was 'perfectly sound'.[669] Barclay's accepted the MTCPs judgement and accepted the offered site from Exeter City Council. Lloyd's and Burton's continued to fight both the MTCP and the City Council in a battle which took nearly two years to resolve, lodging further complains over the terms of the leases and the rent levels. Additionally, Burton's also rejected the City Council's building brief for their new building, as they firm was unhappy at having to provide basements in the additional shops they had agreed to build to let.

The three-year battle over sites, leases and design were evidently designed to try to wear the Council down and capitulate to their demands, but the Council stood firm. The support of the MTCP helped, particularly when it was noted that Burton's and

[666] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Burtons to Town Clerk re disposals, 18 March 1950; Letter from Burton's to Town Clerk re disposals, 30 March 1950.
[667] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950: Handwritten notes re architectural control and Burtons, n.d, c.July 1949.
[668] DHC, 5895 City Architects Papers, Box 22 - File No.1 C.A.R.S: Letter from Blaise Gillie of MTCP to Lloyd's Bank re site objections, 31 January 1949.
[669] Ibid.

Lloyd's had lodged very similar objections with the MTCP to the allocated site and lease and were thought to be colluding with one another. [670]

Both of the objections were thrown out by the MTCP on the grounds that the Council had met its obligations under both section 19, subsection 6 of the 1944 Act and sections 82 and 83 of the 1947 Act to provide suitable accommodation and neither firm had been unfairly treated.[671] The two firms reluctantly accepted the offered leases and began their plans for new buildings. Both firms had agreed also to build additional shops to let, but had proved so difficult to deal with that several of the potential tenants had turned down the offered leases and took alternative premises.[672]

The difficulties that Exeter experienced with Lloyd's and Burton's demonstrate the pressure which firms applied to local authorities in attempts to have plans changed to their advantage. In Exeter the City Council held firm and protected the plans from such attack. The attitude of the MTCP aided rather than hindered them on these occasions, with the reasoning behind the plans and site allocations being agreed as reasonable and sensible. Not all blitzed cities felt able to do this, with the pressure to return city centres to profit and rateable value leading some to capitulate to pressure or jettison plans. Portsmouth and Hull both abandoned their original post-war plans

[670] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Notes of Meeting between estate manager of Mssrs M Burton Ltd and Mr Shears of Messrs Healy and Baker and the Deputy Town clerk, Consultant Estate Surveyor & Estate Surveyor, Central Areas Reconstruction Scheme – Disposals: Messrs Montague Burton Ltd 24 February 1950.
[671] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Notes of Meeting between estate manager of Mssrs M Burton Ltd and Mr Shears of Messrs Healy and Baker and the Deputy Town clerk, Consultant Estate Surveyor & Estate Surveyor, Central Areas Reconstruction Scheme – Disposals: Messrs Montague Burton Ltd 24 February 1950; Notes of Meeting between...Lloyds Bank Ltd and Deputy Town Clerk, Consultant Estate Surveyor, Estate Surveyor and Mr Risdon, 27 February 1950 .
[672] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950: Letter from Wheaton's to Estate Surveyors Office re site allocation, 30 March 1950; Letter from Lloyd's Bank to Town Clerk re Bruford's site allocation, 12 July 1950.

due to the need to create rateable value and the pressure of traders to be allowed to build as they pleased.[673] Exeter's experience also demonstrates the depth of feeling which the loss of freeholds could inspire in property owners. The loss of freeholds not only represented a financial loss to some traders, but also a loss of autonomy. Property owners were expected to follow local authority guidelines for their new buildings and could be refused permission to build if they did not comply.[674] The loss of freeholds also meant that property owners now had to pay ground rent, and rent disputes appear to have been common amongst blitzed cities more generally.[675]

Exeter's experience also demonstrates that the process was very much reliant on the attitude of the traders in order to run smoothly. Where traders were willing to work with the Council, the negotiation of leases was straightforward, as seen with Group 2 and 3 on Exeter's High Street. These groups were leased to several big concerns – Pearl Assurance, Commercial Union, Westminster Bank and Marks and Spencer – who all built shops to let as well as their own premises. The negotiating of the leases for both these large firms, and the smaller businesses which later rented shops from them, was refreshingly simple because the firms in question were happy to be flexible and work within the guidelines provided by Exeter City Council.[676] These particular

[673] Junichi Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940s', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.51-52, 57'; Nick Tiratsoo, 'Labour and the Reconstruction of Hull' in his (ed.) *The Attlee Years* (London: Pinter, 1991) pp.130-131, 134, 136.
[674] DHC, 5896, City Architects Papers, Box 23 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Town Clerk to Burton's re architectural treatment and lease, 1 July 1948.
[675] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948; 5897 City Architects Papers Box 24 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group 2, May 1949-March 1951, Notes of a meeting regarding terms of building agreement and ground lease, 4 October 1949.
[676] DHC, 5897 City Architects Papers, Box 24 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group 2, May 1949-March 1951; Central Areas Reconstruction Group 3, May 1949-October 1961;

groups were the first to start building work and Marks and Spencer was the first new store to open in 1951.[677]

The idea of 'big business' dominating post-war reconstruction stems partly from firms such as these, who were the major builders post-war in blitzed cities, plus later development which built on the system conceived post-war. It is in the period covered by this chapter that the leaders in physical rebuilding became apparent, as those who were keen to take on the responsibility of building tended to be the same groups in each blitzed cities. The main problem with the shift from freehold to leasehold tenure was that smaller property owners and traders could not view a leasehold building as having the same investment value as a freehold building. This made them reluctant to rebuild under the new system as they felt the value of their site was in the freehold and the ownership of the land rather than the rental potential of a building. As a result, there were few independent traders who chose to build their own premises under the leasehold system. There were some who did choose to do this, most notably in Plymouth with the major department stores of Dingles, Spooner's and the Co-Operative Society.[678] In Bristol a similar pattern was seen, with Lewis's department store choosing to build new premises rather than rent them, demonstrating that reconstruction was not the preserve of multiple stores or national finance companies. The process with these traders appears to have been smooth, particularly again in the case of Plymouth as the sites allocated were close to pre-war sites and neighbours.[679]

[677] Marks and Spencer Archive, History of the Exeter store - http://marksintime.dbda.net/store_history/ accessed 5/9/2016.
[678] Stephen Essex & Mark Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War-Damaged Plymouth, 1941-1961: Devising and Defending a Modernist Agenda', in Clapson & Larkham's (eds), *The Blitz and it's Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2013) pp.159-160.
[679] Ibid.

The reluctance of small traders to build is understandable when considered from their point of view, as they viewed the leasehold system as essentially charging them to trade through the rent payable on the site. Even if their property was mortgaged prior to the war, the payments were going towards the overall ownership of the site which was an asset in its own right. [680] Those who took on the responsibility of building in blitzed cities tended to be companies who could view a leasehold building as long-term asset; the insurance companies, banks, multiple traders and development companies. To them the building was an asset, even on a leasehold tenure, because it would provide long-term rental income and was often part of a portfolio of similar property.[681]

As already stated above, and briefly explored in the previous chapter, the leasehold tenure offered by local authorities was unattractive to many property owners and independent traders. The problem of the '1939 standard' in compensation and purchasing of sites added to the problem, as many traders and owners stated that the money they were to receive was not enough to cover the construction of a new building, and the leasehold tenure made investment in bricks and mortar unattractive to many.[682] The changes of the 1947 planning act which allowed acquisition at current market value helped to ease this situation a little, but traders and property owners were still unable to claim Cost of Works compensation which they felt they were entitled to. As such, the smaller traders were either reluctant or unable to build and it fell to 'big business' to take on the burden.

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[680] *Western Morning News,* '"Little Man's" Voice at Plymouth Inquiry', 3 May 1946; 'Exeter Shopkeepers Fear High Ground Rents', 12 October 1948; 'Rents Bar Private Shops', 23 March 1949; 'Smaller Shops Cannot Afford City Rents' 10 March 1949;
[681] Flinn, 'City of Our Dreams', p.242.
[682] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948;'High Court Action is Threatened' 1 May 1946; 'Plymouth Inquiry Plea for Bombed Out', 2 May 1946.

Certainly there were cases of real hardship amongst blitzed traders, particularly for the very small businesses who had rented rather than owned their sites because the rents for the new shops do appear to have been pegged too high for many of them.[683] The majority of these smaller traders indicated to Councils that they wished to let premises rather than build their own, which in Exeter led to the allocation of Princesshay for such businesses.[684] It has originally been assumed that local authorities would use direct labour to build such shops, as this was initially the approach taken in Coventry. Coventry had initially intended to build much of the new shopping centre itself, so that it would own both the sites and the buildings, and it was assumed that this model would be followed everywhere.[685] Instead many of the blocks of shops for letting to small independent traders were built by specialist companies, leading to the emergence of the development company. The role of development companies, finance companies and multiple traders in reconstruction is explored in more depth in Chapter Five, but as demonstrated here, they filled a specific niche in the reconstruction of blitzed cities.

Rebuilding in central areas did start in small ways during the period 1947 to 1950, with the laying of the new central roads in Plymouth and Exeter and the first allocations of steel and investment in 1949. Plymouth started work on the new main streets in the city centre, which would later be named Royal Parade and Armada Way, in 1947. The City Council had requested permission from the MTCP to start the

[683] *Express & Echo,* 'Council Shops at Rack Rents?' 21 March 1950; *Western Morning News,* 'Exeter Shopkeepers Fear High Ground Rents', 12 October 1948; 'Rents Bar Private Shops', 23 March 1949; 'Smaller Shops Cannot Afford City Rents' 10 March 1949.
Exeter City Council appears to have partially tackled this problem through the building of Princesshay, which was designed for such businesses. A survey of the trade directories for 1938 and 1955 show that the majority of businesses found in the High Street pre-war can still be found trading in the city centre in 1955.
[684] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Planning Committee, 22 November 1949.
[685] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp.31, 40-41, Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City,* pp.122-123.

work ahead of a planned visit by the King and Queen in 1947, intending that they Royal couple would be able to view the new layout and the city could dedicate Royal Parade to them. They were not actually given permission to proceed but started the work anyway, deciding to present the MTCP with a fait accompli rather than not have anything for their Royal visitors to view.[686] This is another example of Plymouth's determination to keep to their plan, as they had barely just received permission to proceed with their plan at all when they took this action. Royal Parade was the first street to be built in the city as a result of this early action, with the first buildings underway by 1950. The city also benefitted from the largest allocation of steel and investment due to their advanced plans and initial infrastructure work, being allocated 750 tons of steel in 1949.[687] Plymouth was later allocated a further 1,142 tons as a result of other blitzed cities not being in a position to use the steel they had been allocated.[688]

Exeter started its street work in 1949 with work on Bedford Street and what would become Princesshay. As in Plymouth, the work was done ahead of a Royal visit; in this case Princess Elizabeth. The Princess unveiled a commemorative plaque marking the beginning of the reconstruction work in October 1949 and the new pedestrian way was named Princesshay in her honour. Despite the early work in laying out this area, Princesshay itself was not completed until 1958. Instead, building work started with the Pearl Assurance building on the north side of the High Street.

[686] Hasegawa, 'The Attitude of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Toward Blitzed Cities in 1940s Britain', p.284; Essex and Brayshay, 'Boldness Diminished? The post-war battle to replan a bomb-damaged provincial city', *Urban History,* 35/3 (2008), p.451.
[687] *Western Morning News,* 'No Steel Increase for Plymouth Yet', 2 February 1949.
[688] *Western Morning News,* 'Millions Waiting to be Spent', 3 January 1950.

As in Plymouth, the city received early allocations of steel and investment in 1949, receiving the fifth largest allocation amongst blitzed cities at 450 tons.[689]

The steel allocations made to blitzed cities were acknowledged within central government as token amounts designed to improve morale. The steel allocations were tiny compared to the needs of the cities, with it being noted that the amounts allocated were not enough to fully complete any one building. The investment allocations were similarly small, causing concern and anger amongst traders. Both Lloyd's Bank and Burton's in Exeter were deeply unhappy at the small allocations, protesting that as they were on a waiting list for licences they may have to wait up to six years to be allowed to start rebuilding.[690] Lloyd's cited the projected cost of their project, £220,000, against the investment allocation of £50,000 made to the city as evidence of this.[691] However, the firms had misunderstood the nature of the allocations, assuming that they would be given in their entirety to an individual firm to cover all the building requirements in materials and investment. Instead the allocations were given to cities as a whole to be shared amongst firms, with the intention that they would allow some work to begin on foundation works for a few buildings. As the work progressed, further allocations would be shared in a similar way, allowing work to continue and allowing more firms to make a start on building.

Blitzed cities were promised larger allocations for 1950 to allow more building to start, but the 1949 allocations proved to be something of a false dawn as in 1949 a further economic crisis developed. The problems with convertibility experienced in

[689] *Western Morning News,* 'No Steel Increase for Plymouth Yet', 2 February 1949.
[690] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Lloyd's Bank to MTCP re building licences, 11 May 1950; Letter from Burton's to Town Clerk re building licences, 19 May 1950.
[691] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Lloyd's Bank to MTCP re building licences, 11 May 1950.

1947 had highlighted the weaknesses of sterling, eventually causing a major devaluation of the pound in 1949 in an attempt to curb the loss of dollars and promote exports. The ongoing problems with dollar reserves and the cost of imports led to the continued restriction of building materials, with restrictions on reconstruction reaching into the 1950s. The devaluation of the pound caused concern in blitzed cities as it was recognised that it was likely to push up building costs and would therefore increase the reluctance of many traders to build. The increased costs were attributed to imported materials such as timber and zinc, because the devaluation would increase their price.[692] The growing threat of the Korean War also contributed to the continued restrictions on materials as resources were directed toward re-armament rather than building projects.

In addition to the restrictions on materials, the government also restricted private investment in retail, leisure and office building. The allocations of investment made to blitzed cities were not allocations of public money for reconstruction, but the amount of private spending which was allowed for reconstruction projects. This move appears to have been an attempt to ensure that investment was directed to manufacturing and related capital investment, which was seen as more beneficial to the national economic position. It was also a tool to keep consumer spending in the UK in check, as the high levels of liquidity in the economy meant that inflation was an ever-present threat. By controlling the stream of consumer goods throughout the 1940s, the possibility of inflation driven by consumers pushing up prices of scarce goods through demand and a plentiful money supply was reduced. This concern was discussed during the war in central government and appears to be the driver behind

[692] *Western Morning News* 'Devaluation May Hinder Plymouth Rebuilding', 24 September 1949.

the continued restrictions on both building materials and investment for the reconstruction of city centres.[693] If there were few shops and also a restricted number of goods to buy, inflation would be kept in check. In addition to this, there was the possibility that the excess money in the economy, the result of war savings, would be invested in manufacturing businesses rather than retail business. As a result of these measures, blitzed cities saw their allocations of steel and investment constrained well into the 1950s, preventing reconstruction from proceeding quickly.

Local Politics and Reconstruction

The influence of political ideology on reconstruction plans has previously been thought of as a straightforward right-conservative/left-radical split, with Labour-led cities such as Plymouth and Coventry producing more radical plans than their Conservative cousins, such as Portsmouth and Exeter. Chapters Two and Three demonstrated that this picture is misleading, as the *Plan for Plymouth* was produced under the wartime Conservative council, while Exeter's plan was both produced and executed under a Conservative council. Political affiliation also had little influence on the speed of building, with both house-building and city centre reconstruction constrained by the lack of building materials and labour. Where the political influence on reconstruction is strongest is the politicisation of reconstruction as a right/left issue by the Conservative and Liberal parties. The two parties used the economic constraints placed on reconstruction as a tool for attacking the Labour party and its policies. This had led to the impression that the slow pace of building post-war was due to the Socialist ideology of the Labour party rather than the economic crises

[693] TNA, CAB 66-27-27, War Cabinet Reconstruction Problems, 1 August 1942, pp.2-3.

faced by the nation.[694] The roots of this assumption can be found in the attitudes of those who represented the political right in the post war years: Conservative councillors and candidates, the Ratepayers Associations and business owners.

Housing in particular became a politicised issue, something especially noticeable in the local press for Plymouth, with the Conservatives keen to attack the Labour government's approach to reconstruction, and housing in particular. Although building was progressing faster than it had after the First World War, the demand for housing was also much greater. Many of those on the housing waiting lists had lost their homes in the early years of the war, and the wait to be re-housed was becoming intolerable. Housing progress was therefore perceived to be slow and the restrictions on building became increasingly difficult to defend. Almost all house building until 1952 was municipal, with only limited numbers of private houses for sale being built. The restrictions on private building were put in place as part of the more general restrictions on materials and labour, with the intention being to direct scarce resources towards the greatest areas of need.[695] As it was predominantly working class housing which had been destroyed by bomb damage, owing to its proximity to town centres and industrial areas, it was recognised that housing for this group was of the highest priority. This may have given Conservative MPs and councillors some additional ammunition against their Labour counterparts, as they could claim a bias in building as the working classes were also likely to be Labour voters.

The restrictions on private building were also seen as an attack on private enterprise and property, a stance taken up by some blitzed traders and property owners in

[694] This assumption has been expressed to the author by members of local history societies during talks. It can also be found in works such as Correlli Barnett's *Audit of War: The illusion and reality of Britain as a great nation* (London: MacMillan, 1986).
[695] Harriet Jones, ''This Is Magnificent!': 300,000 houses a year and the Tory revival after 1945', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1, 2000, p.101.

relation to city centre rebuilding as well.[696] It should be noted, however, that although the houses themselves were built for local authorities, the work was undertaken by local, private building firms.[697] Direct labour by councils was rare even after 1945, with only a handful of local authorities choosing to take this route. Coventry was one such council and the decision to use direct labour was partially a reflection of the strongly Labour council. However, Coventry also had serious problems with attracting and retaining building labour in the city, as there were plentiful jobs in the manufacturing sector, which also paid better than construction.[698] This may have partially influenced their decision to use direct labour, as it gave them better control over working conditions and pay which may have helped to minimise labour losses to other sectors. The complaint from builders in the three South Western cities was the lack of more lucrative private building than a lack of building contracts.

The complaints of building companies extended into the area of restrictions on materials as well as the licensing system. The refusal of the Board of Trade to approve licenses for private building, citing the scarcity of materials, led to builders claiming that building materials were plentiful and that this was a government ploy to deprive them of business. This claim, plus the rate of house building, fed the discontent of blitzed traders.

The arguments over the speed of building and the restriction of private building provide the main area of political division and dissent in reconstruction. The restrictions on materials and labour were seen by some on the right as a deliberate

[696] *Western Morning News,* 'Exeter Has No 'Drive': Trader blames state control' 20 February 1947; Letters to the Editor, 'Private Enterprise Shackled', 9 March 1946; 'Injustice to Would-Be House-Owners', 27 May 1949.
[697] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee; Notices of housing tenders were also carried in all local papers
[698] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* pp.35-36.

policy by the Labour government to squeeze private enterprise. The apparent availability of materials for building fuelled this position, as seen with the arguments of blitzed traders. Candidates and councillors for the Conservative and Liberal parties positioned themselves on the side of private enterprise and the freeing of controls. It is notable that candidates for both parties used the housing and reconstruction struggles as campaign platforms for local elections. Norman Watt, the 1946 Liberal candidate for the Plymouth Mutley ward, summed up the Labour councils policy as 'destroying private enterprise instead of getting the maximum amount of houses in the shortest possible time'. He went on to state that the Liberal policy would be to put housing ahead of 'party dogma' and use all methods available to build.[699] In the same year, the Conservative candidates also attacked the slow pace and building and particularly criticised the use of temporary housing on the basis of cost.[700]

Cost of building was a complaint common to both housing and city centre reconstruction. Conservative and Liberal councillors frequently attacked the potential cost of city centre reconstruction and the rising cost of house-building. The main concern was the potential rate-burden on citizens, as it was understood that government grants would not cover the full cost of building. The councillors who called for simpler reconstruction plans were generally doing so with an eye on costs, as had been seen in Plymouth with the calls for a simplified plan in 1944.

The cost of housing was also a major concern, as costs rose steadily in the post-war years due to the shortages of materials and labour. The use of non-traditional housing came in for criticism as the cost of these houses was often higher

[699] *Western Morning News,* 'Whitehall or Plymouth?' 16 October 1946.
[700] *Western Morning News,* 'More Delay Forecast', 9 October 1946.

than building traditional houses. However, councils received a subsidy from the government for each house to ease the burden.

The potential rises in rates were to some extent a class issue as much as a political one, as ratepayers of the middle class considered themselves to be paying for luxuries for the working class with no benefit to themselves. The perceived attack on private enterprise further embittered the argument, as it could be viewed as a class attack by the Labour party. The emergence of the Ratepayers Association in Exeter as a political party demonstrates how delicate a situation many councils found themselves in, trying to balance the needs of the working classes with the demands of the ratepaying middle classes who considered themselves to be 'footing the bill' for those of a lower social status. Although local authorities received grants for housing, and for the provision of some other extended services such as the expanded education system, it was still expected that they would raise money via the rates to meet some costs, such as the servicing of loans for building land. The increasing rate burden had been a bone of contention since the interwar period and the expansion of local authority responsibility in housing and welfare.[701]

The rate burden fell heaviest on the 'middling sort' within the middle classes, who resented having to pay for the improvement of the working classes – or to be more exact, they resented having to pay for what they considered luxurious facilities far above what was required. This situation continued post-war and represented one of the biggest conflicts between the Labour and Conservative factions of the local authorities in the three cities. The Conservative councillors were very aware that many of their supporters would be in the group who wanted to see a decreased rate

[701] *Western Morning News,* 'Correspondence: Economy Essential', 10 February 1921; *Western Daily Press,* 'Property Owners Criticise Council Houses', 28 March 1930.

bill rather than a rising one to pay for social services and housing.[702] Arguments over rate levels spilled over into the reconstruction argument, as many of the smaller traders were those who resented the increasing rate bills. It is notable that in Plymouth and Exeter increases to the rates were met with anger and the assertion that the rate bills were extortionate and far in excess of those found in other cities. In both cases the average city rate bill was actually far lower than in many other blitzed cities.[703] The rate argument was often brought into city centre reconstruction arguments, as traders demanded to know what they were paying rates for if rebuilding was not possible. The role of rates in house building and the consistent output of houses may have added to the impression amongst traders that city centre reconstruction was being deliberately blocked by local authorities.

The Conservative attacks on Labour's housing policies reflected growing middle-class dissent over Labour's approach to both governance and reconstruction throughout the 1940s. This dissent is not always explicit amongst property owners and traders in the blitzed cities, but the growth of other movements and evidence of dissent over Labour policies outside reconstruction demonstrate this feeling. The emergence of the Housewives League demonstrated the frustration and anxiety felt by women at the continued restrictions on consumer goods and food, as they demonstrated against rationing and consumer restrictions.[704] This movement was mostly middle-class and reflected the loss of class status as much as the wearying effect of rationing on the housewife. The League was not especially active in Devon, with neither Exeter or Plymouth having branches of the League, although one was

[702] *Western Morning News,* 'Tory Fear of Higher Rate', 18 March 1949.
[703] *Western Morning News,* '"Plymouth Bankrupt" if Socialists Stay In', 11 October 1947.
[704] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Rationing, Austerity and the Conservative Party Recovery after 1945', *The Historical Journal,* 37/1, 1994, pp.181-182; James Hinton, 'Militant Housewives: The British Housewives' League and the Attlee Government', *History Workshop,* 38, 1994, pp.132-134.

set up in Teignmouth.[705] Bristol, a city which housed both the very poor and the very wealthy, saw a more active women's movement in contrast, with the setting up of several branches of the League.[706]

The Housewives' League represented a more general anxiety amongst the middle classes at the potential loss of status, both economic and personal, under the Labour government. The policies that Labour were pursuing suggested that they were working toward their stated aims of nationalising land and industry, with the nationalisation of coal and the proposed nationalisation of haulage reinforcing this perception.[707] For blitzed traders and property owners, the terms of the 1944 and 1947 planning acts with their restrictions on the resale of freeholds back to the original owners would have suggested that Labour was looking to restrict private property in the long term. That this had been a stated aim during the interwar period would have only exacerbated this feeling, and the nationalisation of some industries would have reinforced the idea that the restrictions on reconstruction were the beginnings of a full attack on private enterprise.[708] Although not explicitly stated by traders in their concerns and complaints over reconstruction, the general unease demonstrated by many over reconstruction policy suggests that this perception may have been at its root.

The political element of reconstruction was therefore not a straightforward left/right split over the plans themselves, but a way for the opposition parties to attack the Labour party and its policies. The constant message throughout the late 1940s was

[705] *Western Morning News,* 'Housewives' League', 16 April 1947.
[706] *Western Daily Press,* 'Strachey and Bakers', 5 July 1946.
[707] *Western Morning News,* 'A Protest at Exeter', 12 January 1946.
[708] Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning,* pp.108-115; Michael Tichelar, 'The Labour Party, agricultural policy and the retreat from land nationalisation during the Second World War', *Agricultural History Review,* 51/2 (2003), pp.209-225

that Labour was failing on reconstruction by curtailing private enterprise and poorly directing resources. There was also the suggestion that resources for building were available, but were being withheld deliberately. The progress of other aspects of reconstruction, such as the implementation of the National Insurance scheme, the creation of the NHS and the nationalisation of some industries, further fuelled the concept that money was being squandered and private enterprise strangled for the sake of a socialist dream. City reconstruction plans were caught in the middle of this political argument, and became symbols of right and left thinking in reconstruction.

Conclusions

The economic crises of the late 1940s emerge as the main reason for the slow pace of reconstruction in the three cities. The need to conserve materials essential to building left the building licence system in place until the 1954, with licences initially restricted to housing and building work which was considered of economic benefit. The latter category included businesses which could aid the export drive or reduce imports, which retail goods were not considered a major part of. Instead materials and labour were directed toward the major manufacturing industries, including vehicles, steel and chemicals. As a result, blitzed traders and property owners were unable to obtain licences to build, preventing central areas reconstruction work from progressing.

Labour shortages and their attendant restrictions further exacerbated the problem, with building labour also directed to housing and export industries ahead of retail and leisure building. The policy of reducing labour in non-essential industries, including the building industry, from August 1947 in order to direct labour toward

export-supporting industries further reduced the available labour force for building, with even house-building suffering as a result.

The directing of labour and materials to essential building work gave the impression to some blitzed traders and property owners that resources for building were available, but were being withheld from them. Although this can be seen in Exeter, where traders did indeed suggest that the City Council was deliberately withholding building licences from them, there is less evidence of this type of dissent in the other two cities. It is also noticeable that there is not as much demand for the dropping of the reconstruction plans on this basis as in other cities such as Hull and Portsmouth. Traders in these cities felt that it was the complicated nature of the reconstruction plans that was to blame for the delays in rebuilding, as the plans would require large amounts of scarce building material. The relaying of streets would also require much labour, whereas if the original street patterns were used, this would not need to be done. As a result, the City Councils in these cities came under pressure to drop or significantly alter their reconstruction plans. . The economic problems of the late 1940s were therefore directly responsible for the slow pace of building and the erosion of support for reconstruction plans in some cities.

However, this loss of support is not repeated in the three cities, where support for reconstruction plans remained fairly solid. Instead there was much frustration at the slow pace of progress, which progress in other areas such as housing underlined. The shortages of labour for even these essential works, and the resultant use of PoW labour and ‘flying squads’ of additional labour, were well known, and seem to have initially contributed to the continued support for reconstruction plans since it was understood that the labour shortages were due to the post-war economic

difficulties of 1945 and 1946. The later crises of 1947 and 1949 saw an increased impatience with central government and local authorities amongst blitzed traders who do not seem to have fully appreciated the seriousness of the situation. This may be due to the press coverage of Britain's post-war export drive and a weak understanding of the problems which the economy was facing, as suggested by the letter from Exeter firm Bruford's to the local paper. That the firm felt the need to explain the situation via the press to their fellow traders suggests that the situation was poorly understood in Exeter at least. The coverage of the export drive during the first years of peace may have given the impression that the economy should have been well on the way to recovery by 1947, so the dollar crisis and the resultant need to make savings on imports and expenditure may not have made sense to traders while exports were still well above pre-war levels.

The support for reconstruction plans was not universal, with property owners still unhappy at the loss of their freeholds. Bristol in particular had struggled to find a suitable scheme which would carry majority support amongst the blitzed traders and property owners, as the Broadmead proposal was not supported by all. The park proposal for the Wine Street area was dropped after traders indicated that they would support the Broadmead plan only if the Wine Street area was used for another purpose. The proposed civic centre carried enough support to make the Broadmead plan viable, but the continued delays in reconstruction and the problems with Bristol's CPOs threatened this support. Traders were only prepared to support Broadmead if the whole plan was carried through, including the civic centre. The MTCPs refusal to grant a CPO for this area in 1947 threatened to collapse the whole plan, as traders would not support the Broadmead move unless there was a guarantee that the Wine

Street area would not return to retail use. It was felt that only Bristol City Council's acquisition of the site and the approval of the civic centre plan could guarantee this. Bristol's experience highlights how crucial the support of the MTCP was to reconstruction plans being carried through and how easily plans were altered or blocked without this support.

The need to save money again appears as the main reason behind the MTCPs reticence in granting CPOs and approving plans, as the Treasury was seeking to limit expenditure on grants to blitzed cities. The three cities had all enjoyed the support of the MTCP for their plans prior to the public enquiries of 1946, but the changing economic situation and the full financial implications of their reconstruction plans changed this. It came as a shock to both Bristol and Plymouth to have this support withdrawn, with only Exeter's plan being approved with minimal fuss. As Exeter's plan did not involve such radical changes to street layouts or such a large acquisition of land, the MTCP was prepared to grant the whole of their Declaratory Area Order and the CPOs as the cost would not be great. The size and scale of Bristol and Plymouth's plans in contrast caused some anxiety as they would require large amounts of investment to execute, and as such had to be pruned by the Ministry.

The need to save money forced other changes to the plans of the three cities, some of which have previously been attributed to trader pressure or the interference of specific types of businesses, such as the multiple traders. However, on closer examination the changes were instead required by the MTCP and the Ministry of Transport on the grounds of cost. The changed route of Exeter's bypass was one such example, which altered both the road plans and the plans for new civic and

leisure buildings. In all three cities plans for new cultural buildings, such as theatres and museums, were postponed indefinitely on the grounds of cost. Allocations of investment, materials and labour were not permitted for such building, resulting in the museum plans of Exeter and Bristol being dropped entirely and Plymouth's new theatre not emerging for another thirty years. The changing rules on demolition of standing property saw other features of the plans changed, as buildings which had been earmarked for demolition now had to be retained. It some cases, such as the retention of the Co-Operative Society building in Exeter, these decisions have been attributed to the power of multiple traders, who were thought to have pressured local councils into changing plans and retaining buildings. A better understanding of the economic pressures being placed on the MTCP, and by extension local authorities, demonstrates that this was rarely the case, with other factors instead dictating what was retained and changed.

These pressures were an ongoing factor in reconstruction, with shortages of materials and investment stretching into the 1950s and dictating how reconstruction was undertaken. The effect of these restrictions on building and the achievements of the three cities despite them will be examined in Chapter Five. Despite the challenges they faced, the three cities achieved much in terms of house building and once city centre rebuilding was allowed to start, they made swift progress despite the obstacles in their path.

Chapter 5 – 1950-55: Glimmers of Hope

The 1950s finally saw the physical reconstruction of blitzed city centres, although the pace of building was slow. Many blitzed cities, and also those which had suffered some war damage but not enough to be designated as 'blitzed', were still unable to rebuild fully, with reconstruction projects continuing well into the next decade and sometimes beyond. Cultural and leisure buildings, such as Plymouth's new Theatre Royal, were often the last aspects of the plans to be built as a result; work on Plymouth's theatre did not begin until 1978.[709] The main controls on city centre building remained the economic constraints on capital investment and materials imposed by central government. These were slowly lifted for other sectors of construction, such as housing and industry, but building for retail, office space and leisure facilities remained tightly controlled until 1954 when the building licence system was finally removed.[710] The change in government in 1951 from Labour to Conservative did see some changes in investment policy, but blitzed cities still very much remained the Cinderella of economic policy.

In addition to this, cities experienced some restrictions through planning legislation and infrastructure investment. The requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 for all planning authorities to produce a development plan meant that all local authorities were expected to attend to the potential development of their areas.[711] It was stipulated that development plans had to be produced within five years of the Act, which meant that blitzed cities often had to resubmit plans; Exeter and Plymouth both resubmitted their plans for approval between 1950 and 1953. Some blitzed cities did find that changes had to be made to their original plans due

[709] Jeremy Gould, *Plymouth: Vision of a modern city'* (Swindon: English Heritage 2010), p.71.
[710] Oliver Marriot, *The Property Boom* (London: Pan Books, 1967), p.11.
[711] Town and Country Planning Act 1947 (London: HMSO, 1947).

to the 1947 Act, as some county boroughs acquired additional planning responsibilities due to the consolidation of planning authorities. Investment in infrastructure, such as roads, remained under the control of the Ministry of Transport which was expected to direct investment towards projects which would assist the export market and economic growth, which meant that urban roads often sat a long way down the list of priorities. Regardless of this rather gloomy backdrop, blitzed cities did make a start on city centre rebuilding, with the first shops being completed in the three South Western cities by 1955. House building was given a boost by the incoming Conservative government of 1951, which pledged to increase housing output to 300,000 houses per year.[712] The three cities saw an increase in housing output as a result, with the first moves towards the use of high-rise construction systems made during this period.

Blitzed City Reconstruction and the Investment Programme Committee

1949 had seen the first token allocations of steel and investment to the blitzed cities, allowing a small start to be made by those cities whose plans were well developed. Plymouth had benefitted from one of the largest initial allocations with 750 tons of steel, with Exeter receiving 450 tons and Bristol 390.[713] The allocations reflected how advanced a city's plans were, explaining why Bristol received the smallest allocation despite being the largest of the three cities. The 1949 allocations gave hope to the blitzed cities that they would be allowed increasing allocations of steel and investment in the subsequent years, finally allowing reconstruction to begin in earnest. This hope was particularly boosted in Plymouth with extra allocations of

[712] *Times,* 'Call for 300,000 Houses a Year', 14 October 1950.
[713] *Western Morning News,* 'No Steel Increase for Plymouth Yet', 2 February 1949.

steel being made to the city, so that it eventually received 1,892 of the 5,500 tons of steel allocated to blitzed cities in 1949.[714] The city's advanced plans meant that it was able to absorb the steel which had been earmarked for other blitzed cities when they were unable to use it. The example of Plymouth undoubtedly encouraged the other South Western cities to press forward with their preparations as it appeared that materials and investment would now be available for those cities that were in a position to begin building.

Unfortunately, the 1949 allocations were something of a false dawn, with investment in blitzed city reconstruction stalling in 1950 and increasing only by small amounts in the following years. 1950 saw the beginning of a programme of cuts to spending and investment allocations by central government, as it sought to cut costs in the wake of the 1949 crisis and direct investment toward the export trades. The massive rearmament programme provoked by the Korean War also saw spending and investment slashed in other sectors in order to meet the costs of the programme.[715] Blitzed city reconstruction was not considered a priority compared with the demands of rearmament and exports, and therefore allocations of essential materials, such as steel, remained very small in the first years of the decade.

The expectations in blitzed cities that larger allocations of investment and materials would be forthcoming in 1950 were bitterly disappointed. Reconstruction was essentially halted in March 1950 with the announcement that only £500,000 of investment would be allowed on reconstruction projects, and that this would be shared between only seven of the nineteen blitzed cities. Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth were all included within this list, demonstrating that their plans were

[714] *Western Morning News,* 'Millions Waiting to be Spent', 3 January 1950.
[715] Samuel Brittain, *The Treasury Under the Tories, 1951-1964* (London: Penguin, 1964), p.156.

considered to be well advanced.[716] Plymouth and Bristol received an allocation of £100,000 each while Exeter received only £50,000.[717] The allocations were made with the caveat that further allocations might be made later in the year, depending on the performance of the economy and the speed with which the cities started building work. To put the size of the allocations into perspective, the chairman of Plymouth's Reconstruction Committee, Sir Clifford Tozer, stated in January 1950 that there were twenty firms ready to begin construction work in the city centre. Tozer estimated that the projects would require £2.25million of investment and around 5,000 tons of steel.[718] This figure was almost equal to the entire allocation of investment for blitzed cities for 1949/50, which eventually totalled £2.3million.[719]

Blitzed city reconstruction continued to come under pressure between 1951 and 1953 as the Treasury consistently tried to avoid making allocations for reconstruction and sought to cut the allocations which were made to blitzed cities. Despite this, the amount of investment and steel available for city centre reconstruction did increase year on year, if only by small amounts. The amount allocated to blitzed cities in 1951 was £3.5million, £4.5million in 1952 and £4.4million in 1953.[720] 1954 represented the loosening of controls on city centre reconstruction, with a larger programme of £6million announced for that year.[721] Even so, allocations to blitzed cities were absolutely miniscule compared with the overall investment programmes set out for Britain during the early 1950s. Investment was controlled in the period 1947-1953 by the Investment Programme Committee (later renamed the Investment Policy

[716] *Daily Mail,* 'Shock for Bombed Out: Rebuilding cash slashed', March 1950.
[717] *Devon and Exeter Gazette,* 'Bombed Cities', 12 May 1950.
[718] *Western Morning News,* 'Millions Waiting to be Spent', 3 January 1950.
[719] TNA, CAB 129/55/50, Memo by the Minister of Housing and Local Government 'Investment in 1953: Reconstruction in Blitzed City Centres' 20 October 1952.
[720] Ibid.
[721] TNA, T229/521, Memo from R.T Armstrong, 'Blitzed Cities; IPC (WP)(52) 55', 1953.

Committee by the 1951 Conservative government), a sub-committee of the steering committees on economic development.[722] The Investment Programme Committee (IPC hereafter) was established as an expert committee with no particular departmental affiliation, which was meant to produce neutrality and prevent bias in the allocation of investment and resources. The Committee members were drawn from a variety of Ministries, including the Ministry of Works and the Board of Trade, but the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning were not represented. This meant that the majority of building projects, from housing to retail, were left without a direct voice to make the case for investment in these areas.[723]

The IPC had the remit of controlling investment in order to keep prices and the pound stable and create a favourable balance of payments.[724] The Committee was therefore responsible for allocating materials and resources across the whole economy and controlled investment spending of all types, including private investment. The economy was divided into a series of categories and allocations for investment, public spending and resources were made to each category for the relevant ministers to utilize. The investment allocations were separate from government spending allocations as they referred to private investment by firms or individuals, not government spending. The IPC not only controlled public spending, but also controlled private investment in capital projects, with the intention of channelling private investment into the projects which would most benefit the

[722] TNA, CAB129/20, Cabinet Memoranda, 'Investment Programme Committee: Notes by the Secretary of the Cabinet', 13 August 1947.
[723] CAB129/20, Cabinet Memoranda, 'Investment Programme Committee' 13 August 1947; Flinn, 'The City of Our Dreams? p.230; Alec Cairncross, *The Years of Recovery: British Economic Policy 1954-51* (London: 1985), pp.452-455.
[724] TNA, CAB129/20, Cabinet Memoranda, 'Investment Programme Committee', 13 August 1947; Flinn, Catherine, 'The City of Our Dreams?: The political and economic realities of rebuilding Britain's blitzed cities', *Twentieth Century British History,* 23/2, 2012, p.230.

balance of payments.[725] The sums 'allocated' to blitzed cities therefore represented the total amount of money which *private* firms and individuals were allowed to invest in rebuilding in each year; no government funds were given for rebuilding. Additionally, businesses were prevented from raising capital via stock issue by the Capital Investment Committee, which restricted new securities issues to less than £50,000.[726] This committee also regulated business loans, with loans over £50,000 referred to the Capital Investment Committee for approval. These measures were intended to 'deny new funds to enterprises supplying inessential goods to the home market', into which category blitzed traders were considered to fall, further restricting investment in reconstruction.[727]

Blitzed city reconstruction was included in the 'Miscellaneous' category for investment, which had a lower priority for allocations than categories such as 'Production' (including agriculture and industry) and 'Social Services' (including health and housing), which when combined with the more general investment restrictions left reconstruction somewhere near the bottom of the priorities list.[728] As a result the amount of investment allocated to blitzed cities consistently amounted to less than 1% of the total investment programme, even once the worst restrictions were lifted.[729] It is also evident from the surviving documents that the Treasury agreed with the IPC and considered blitzed city reconstruction to be a very low priority, which made the task of representing the cities extremely difficult for the

[725] Marvin E Rozen, 'Investment Control in Post-War Britain 1945-1955' *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science,* 29/2 (1963), pp.187-188.
[726] Rozen, Ibid, p.189.
[727] A.A Rogow, *The Labour Government and British Industry 1945-1951* (Ithaca, 1955) quoted in Rozen, 'Investment Control in Post-war Britain 1945-1955', p.189.
[728] TNA, HLG52/1574, Letter from E.N Plowden to Sir William Douglas re Investment Programme - Annex I, 15 August 1947.
[729] Flinn, Ibid, p.239.

planning ministries.[730] The IPC itself operated within a shroud of secrecy, with its existence and role not being known outside of ministerial circles; even parts of the Civil Service were unaware of its existence.[731] This added to the woes of the planning ministry as it was essentially a go-between for the local authorities and MP's of blitzed cities who did not know about this added layer of bureaucracy within the national economy.

The Ministry of Town and Country Planning, which became the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1951, fought hard to present the case of blitzed cities and secure increased allocations for 1951-1953, presenting a series of projections for spending which required an allocation of at least £7million of investment funds.[732] However, the Treasury and IPC continued to view city centre reconstruction as a low priority for investment. Interestingly, the Treasury hid behind the use of large developers in blitzed cities as a reason for not allocating much from the Investment Programme for rebuilding blitzed cities. They stated that city centre building was merely 'the building of shops and offices' and that 'In the main it is a matter of allowing the big concerns like Woolworths, Marks and Spencer and Ravensefts to put up large buildings. From the point of view of national interest this work is far from essential'.[733]

The suggestion was that city centre work was not important because it was 'only' the big retail companies who wished to build; the work was therefore inconsequential. What this disregards was that the 'big concerns' were generally

[730] TNA, T229/520, IPC: Construction of Blitzed Cities, 'Economic Policy Committee; Reductions in Capital Investment: Memo by the Chancellor of the Exchequer', 10 January 1950.
[731] Flinn, Ibid, p.230.
[732] TNA, T229/521, Investment Programmes Committee: Allocation for the rebuilding of business centres in blitzed cities; Note by the Ministry of Housing and Local Goverment, 28 November 1951.
[733] TNA, T229/521Memo to Mr Strath from Mr Turnbull re Blitzed Cities, 28 August 1952.

building not just for themselves but for the smaller businesses as well. It also glosses over the fact that this situation arose because the Treasury had been unwilling to adjust the terms of the Cost of Works payments to allow for those displaced by town planning schemes to still claim the payments. The situation that this refusal created was well understood in government circles, including the Treasury, but despite it being acknowledged that this would lead to hardship amongst the smaller independent trader there was a total refusal to change the Cost of Works regulations.[734] What the Treasury and IPC attitude also demonstrates is that the restrictions faced by blitzed cities were part of a widespread policy to essentially block blitzed city reconstruction for an undefined period of time.

It is not entirely clear why the Treasury and the Investment Policy Committee wanted to restrict city centre investment so completely. Some reasons for restricting allocations to blitzed cities were straightforward and practical, as demonstrated by a memo from the Chancellor in 1952 stating that materials and investment are to be diverted from city reconstruction to housing and industry. The new Conservative government had made an election pledge to boost housing output to 300,000 houses per year, so the diversion of materials to this purpose was entirely practical.[735] Likewise, the diversion of investment and materials to industrial building was intended to boost output and keep unemployment low.

However, the next part of the memo states that 'If building resources are available in the blitzed towns, they should be diverted to other more essential purposes within the main programmes, in the same area' which sends a rather

[734] TNA, HLG 88/10 'Degree to Which War Damage Payments Will Contribute to Financing Redevelopment', 31 May 1943; HLG71/928 Planning: Financial Assistance for Reconstruction - Memo from the Treasury re Reconstruction Bill Finance, 14 May 1942.
[735] Harriet Jones, ''This Is Magnificent!' 300,000 houses a year and the Tory revival after 1945', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.99-100.

different message.[736] This was a more deliberate policy of removing resources which could be made available to city centre reconstruction and redirecting them, regardless of the state of those other sectors. In the three South Western cities, house building had progressed at a steady rate throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. Bristol, Plymouth and Exeter all sat comfortably within the top ten local authorities in terms of housing completions throughout this period, with Plymouth and Bristol both making good use of non-traditional building methods to boost output.[737] The waiting lists for housing were still large in the three cities but the progress being made in house building was now sending the message that the problem was being tackled. The lack of progress in city centre building was, however, becoming a source of increasing anger amongst both traders and citizens.[738]

Although the reasons behind the reluctance to allow city centre rebuilding are not explicit in the surviving documents, an examination of the wider economic policies of the immediate post-war governments helps our understanding of this stance. A Treasury memo from the early part of the war regarding the impact of the blitz on consumer goods gives an early indication of the policy that the Treasury followed throughout the post-war period. The memo stated that the contraction of trade and the destruction of so many shops caused by the war might induce people not spend their money on 'fripperies' but instead invest in government stock.[739] Likewise the assertion in a 1942 document that traders, property owners and individuals should,

[736] TNA, CAB129/56/35, 'Investment in 1953 - Reconstruction of Blitzed Cities: Memo by the Chancellor of the Exchequer', 3 November 1952.
[737] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Second in Housing', 6 February 1950; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 5 March 1950.
[738] *Western Daily Press,* 'Anxiety Over Broadmead' 9 March 1950; *Western Morning News,* 'Millions Waiting to Be Spent', 3 January 1950.
[739] TNA, HLG88/10, 'Finances of Urban Redevelopment', 12 July 1943.

and would, invest their war savings in rebuilding their property suggests that the Treasury viewed investment rather than consumer spending as the only sensible policy.[740] There was certainly a very deliberate policy by both the Labour and Conservative governments to restrict consumer goods in the post war era as a form of anti-inflationary control. As already stated in Chapter 3, there was widespread concern within government that the boom and bust cycle seen post-1918 would be repeated. The maintenance of rationing was one method of controlling consumer spending and insuring that the liquidity which had built up during the war years did not result in spiralling prices and inflation.

The wider policy of restricting investment and controlling materials was a further method to control this problem. The intention was to push resources towards export goods which in turn would create a favourable balance of payments, increase Britain's reserves and wealth and help pay for the import of some essential materials. By restricting investment in retail property and leisure facilities, investment could be directed toward export goods.[741] Presumably the attitude seen in wartime of trying to push people to invest in war bonds rather than buying consumer goods was also at work here; by restricting access to consumer goods, people might decide to invest instead. At the same time, diverting consumer goods away from home markets to export markets would help to boost exports.[742]

It is therefore possible that leaving the blitzed city centres in their ruined state was viewed as a method of directing goods to the export markets without actually having to further restrict consumer goods. The restricted shopping facilities provided

[740] TNA, HLG71/928, Planning: Financial Assistance for Reconstruction – 'Redevelopment of Bombed Central Areas: Memorandum submitted jointly by the Treasury and the Ministry of Health', 14 May 1942.
[741] Rozen, 'Investment Control in Post-War Britain 1945-1955', pp.200-201.
[742] Cairncross, *The Years of Recovery,* p.22.

by temporary shops and make-shift premises limited the potential outlets for consumer goods in the home market, effectively reducing home demand and allowing for a diversion of consumer goods to export markets. It is not explicit that this was the reason that rebuilding blitzed city centres, or in fact any development in retail property, was given an exceedingly low priority but within the wider economic policy of the era it is a possibility. Investment in goods and industries which would benefit the export trade was given a freer rein, but was still directed and controlled by central government according to what would produce the best national outcome.[743] Ironically this restriction on consumer goods and capital investment probably hindered Britain's growth at the expense of a steady balance of payments and rate of sterling, as the latter helped to keep the price of British exports high thus depressing economic growth.[744]

The restrictions on investment and materials put the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and later the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, under a lot of strain. The MTCP acted as the intermediary for local authorities and the departments responsible for making allocations for reconstruction and development projects. However, the Ministry itself had no direct input or control over how resources were allocated as it had no representation on the Investment Policy Committee, despite its role overseeing housing and city centre reconstruction. This left the Ministry in a difficult position as it had to deal with the increasing impatience of the local authorities, and the traders they represented, regarding the lack of progress in city centre building without actually being able to change the situation. Local authorities, traders and property owners, as well as their representative organisations such as

[743] Cairncross, *The Years of Recovery,* pp.35 & 74.
[744] Brittain, *The Treasury Under the Tories 1951-1964,* pp.142-149.

the Association of Municipal Corporations and the Chambers of Commerce, petitioned the MTCP for action on city centre rebuilding, believing the Ministry to be ultimately responsible for allocating resources.[745]

In the South West, Bristol City Council made representations to the MTCP and its successor, the HLG in October 1950 and November 1952 to request larger allocations of materials and investment for reconstruction, with Exeter doing likewise in April of the same year.[746] The frustration of the MTCP comes across clearly in some of the surviving documents as they continually try to placate the local authorities while pressing an unwilling Treasury and Board of Trade for equitable treatment for city centre reconstruction. It is also evident that the Ministry was keen for these departments to make clear their role in denying blitzed cities the resources to rebuild and the reasons behind this.[747] It was hoped that this would reduce the strain put on the relationship between the Ministry and local authorities and reduce the number of deputations, meetings and petitions that the Ministry had to deal with. The Treasury was not prepared to do this, stating that it was the role and responsibility of the MTCP to deal with such matters, not the Treasury, and as the Chancellor had not historically justified his budgetary position over reconstructions, no precedent should be set now.[748]

This lack of clarity from the Treasury as to why blitzed city reconstruction was not considered a priority was a major reason for the increasing discontent and anger

[745] TNA, T229/521, Letter from Minister of Housing and Local Government to Chancellor of the Exchequer re blitzed cities, 22 August 1952.
[746]BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/6, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 1950-1951, Special Meeting of the Planning and Reconstruction Committee, 'Visit of the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Town and Country Planning', 11 October 1950; M/BCC/PREC/1/7, Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minute, 12 November 1952; *Express and Echo,* 'City Central Area Reconstruction', 25 April 1952.
[747] TNA, T229/521, 'Investment in Blitzed Cities', 28 August 1952.
[748] TNA, T229/521, 'Investment in Blitzed Cities, 28 August 1952.

amongst blitzed traders at the slow pace of progress and led to increasing pressure on local authorities to abandon plans. The first allocations of materials in 1949 and 1950 did help to allay some of the opposition to replanning as progress could actually be seen, but in some cities the opposition to replanning continued as it was still believed that rebuilding without a plan would be faster. Considering the political attitude toward city centre reconstruction, especially as the restrictions were on private investment, and the continuing restriction of building through the licence system, it is clear that the relinquishing of planning would not have made a difference to the pace of building. Hull and Portsmouth provide us with two examples of the abandonment of planning and demonstrate that building was no faster than in cities which kept to their plan. Pre-existing problems were often built back into the urban fabric, such as Hull's city-centre level crossing system and the resulting traffic problems it created.[749]

Progress and Architectural Control

Considering the obstacles put in the path of blitzed cities, the three cities made remarkable progress in rebuilding after 1950. Plymouth saw its first major new store open in 1951 in the form of local department store Dingles, making it the first completed store of its kind in Britain.[750] Exeter also saw the opening of its first new shops on the High Street in March of the same year in a block built by Pearl Assurance.[751] The first major store opened in November 1951, when Marks and

[749] Nick Tiratsoo, 'Labour and the Reconstruction of Hull 1945-1951' in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.) *The Attlee Years* (London: Pinter, 1991), p.134.
[750] Christopher Gill, *Plymouth: A new history*, p.204.
[751] *Express and Echo,* 'First Pearl Building Shop Next Week', 21 March 1951.

Spencer opened the doors of its new High Street store.[752] Bristol lagged slightly behind, owing to the complications which the Broadmead plan had experienced, but the city still had a number of stores well underway by the end of 1951. By the end of 1952 Broadmead had nine completed stores, again mostly built by the multiple traders and national finance companies such as Woolworths and Pearl Assurance.[753] Construction progressed rapidly throughout the period to 1955, with much of the rebuilding of the major streets and shopping areas completed in all three cities.

The battles which the three cities had faced over site leases were not the only point of conflict with traders and developers. Architectural control and treatment of the new buildings became another field of conflict as traders and developers fought to be allowed to rebuild as they wished, rather than to a design created by the local authorities. The issue of architectural control also highlights the roles of consultant planners, architects and municipal technical staffs within post-war reconstruction.

The accepted narrative of reconstruction puts the figure of the 'planner', whether consultant or municipal, at the centre of reconstruction and usually attributes architectural choices to this individual or group.[754] With the dislike which much mid-Twentieth century architecture invokes, the idea that poor design was the fault of self-interested individuals with little interest or concern for the tastes of the masses has certain appeal. A secondary narrative of 'big business' bullying local authorities

[752] Marks and Spencer Archive, History of the Exeter store - http://marksintime.dbda.net/store_history/ accessed 5/9/2016.
[753] John V Punter, *Design Control in Bristol 1940-1990,* p.36.
[754] Felicity Goodall, *Lost Plymouth: Hidden heritage of the three towns* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009); Peter J Larkham; Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War-Damaged Plymuth 1941-1961: Devising and defending a Modernist agenda' in Clapson and Larkham's (eds) *The Blitz and it's Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.162

into accepting their badly designed and cheaply constructed buildings in order to rebuild as quickly as possible often runs underneath this idea of the planner-as-architect.[755]

Post-war architecture tends to attract the labels of 'cheap', 'thrown-up' and 'concrete', regardless of what is actually on the ground, with the terms becoming short-hand for any rebuilt city centre. It is slowly being realised that these particular narratives are massive generalisations and that reconstruction architecture is both a distinct style in itself and was often designed and built with care and attention to detail.[756]

The architectural style of post-war cities was rarely prescribed by consultant planners, as demonstrated by Exeter and Plymouth. Neither Sharp nor Abercrombie decided the architectural style of the new cities which would rise from the rubble, contenting themselves with merely making suggestions about how this question might be settled. Sharp suggested that a suitable style for Exeter would be one which echoed the Georgian parts of the city, reflecting his own architectural preferences. Sharp was a great admirer of both Georgian architecture and planning, particularly praising the Georgian streetscape as the pinnacle of urban form.[757] He praised Exeter's Georgian buildings in *Exeter Phoenix* and suggested a modern interpretation of the style partly as recognition of this architectural heritage and as a way of blending the old and new areas of the city.[758]

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[755] Lynsey Hanley, *Estate: An Intimate History* (2010), p.120-121*;* Catherine Flinn, 'Overlooked Constraints: The rebuilding of blitzed city centres in Britain 1945-1955' (unpublished MA thesis, Oxford, 2007), pp.50 & 58.
[756] John Grindrod, *Concretopia; A journey around the rebuilding of postwar Britain* (Brecon, 2013), pp.122-123; Owen Hatherley, *A New Kind of Bleak: Journeys through urban Britain* (London: Verso, 2012*),* p. 138.
[757] Sharp, *English Panorama* (London: Dent & Sons, 1936), p.47
[758] Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* pp.109-110.

Georgian architecture had enjoyed a revival in the interwar period, with the formation of the Georgian Group and a new appreciation of the simple style of Georgian and Regency building. This had mixed with the influence of Scandinavian architecture to produce a stripped back Neo-Georgian style which had become prevalent for civic buildings of all types. Bristol City Council had chosen this style for their new Council House and Exeter's new City Library had received a similar treatment. As explored in the first chapter, a form of Neo-Georgian architecture had also enjoyed popularity amongst local authorities for their municipal housing projects and can be seen in the interwar estates of all three South Western cities.

Abercrombie took a similar approach in Plymouth, suggesting a Beaux-arts style for Plymouth but stopping short of actually prescribing this for the city. The intention was to produce a Continental feel to the city centre, reflecting its proximity to the sea and its position in the far south of the nation. The wide boulevard-style streets and simple but imposing buildings were intended to produce a spacious, bright feel in the new city centre, mixing the twin roles of business and leisure centre that the city was seen to fulfil.[759]

This style was not so widely adopted in Britain, being seen as a Modernist style more suited to European nations or the big cities of the United States than Britain.[760] Modernism and its architectural cousins had not enjoyed much popularity in Britain, with the style mostly being kept to a handful of buildings, such as the De La Warr Pavllion in Bexhill-on-Sea, and a small number of private houses in the interwar period. Plymouth was the only city to completely embrace such an

[759] Abercrombie and Paton Watson, *A Plan for Plymouth,* p.77; *Western Morning News,* 'Plymouth of the Old Sea Dogs to be Preserved', 27 April 1944.
[760] Grindrod, *Concretopia,* p.107

approach post-war, although Modernist-inspired designs slowly became more prevalent throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

The suggestions of both Sharp and Abercrombie were acted upon by the relevant councils, who decided to follow their suggestions. Bristol City Council chose a similar style to Exeter's Neo-Georgian styling, reflecting the popularity and prevalence of this style just prior to the outbreak of war. The simple brick buildings of the immediate post-war years tend to be dismissed as the produce of austerity and the attendant shortages of materials and money, but were in fact a conscious choice for many towns and cities. The style tapped into the idea of good design speaking for itself, rather than needing the ornamentations so beloved by the architects of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The style was to be a symbol of the 'brave new Britain' emerging from the war; good designs and policies whose simplicity and inclusiveness were their own decoration. Buildings of this type can be found in virtually all blitzed cities, with certain motifs and features repeated in each location - the corner plot with an oblique angled frontage, the curved fronted buildings (often forming a 'circus' or framing another feature), the stone dressings and large regular windows which bring a unity to post-war architecture and demonstrate it is a style in its own right.[761] Even the more Modernist-inspired Plymouth uses such motifs, with the curved frontages being particularly prominent in a city which embraced civic fountains like no other in Britain.

The three cities architectural choices were therefore those of the City Councils rather than being dictated by their consultant planners. Sharp had no influence over

[761] See Appendices D, E and F for examples of such features in the three cities.

Exeter's rebuilding beyond the drawing up of the plan, as his services were not retained by the city beyond the completion of the plan. Abercrombie was retained by Plymouth City Council until 1947 and did advise on the execution of the plan. However, his contract expired before building began, making his influence minimal compared with that of the later architectural advisors to the city. The architectural choices of the cities were influenced by the pre-war architectural movements and the move away from the heavy architectural styles of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The building designs were inspired by the past in Exeter and Bristol, echoing the Georgian portions of the city, and by the future in Plymouth.

Work in Exeter and Plymouth progressed particularly quickly, thanks to the detailed plans produced by both cities and the reasonably swift completion of lease agreements for sites. The two cities also exercised good architectural control over the building designs and city layout, which aided the construction process by making their expectations clear to the firms undertaking building. This could save time in the long-run, as firms had clear instructions for their in-house architects to follow, which meant that designs required less in the way of alterations to fit with city visions. The two cities took different approaches to this aspect of reconstruction, with Exeter's approach being particularly novel, but both demonstrate how blitzed cities were able to keep control over their plans against business interference and Treasury cuts.

Bristol did not have such good control over the city's architecture and as such the finished buildings were not so harmonious as in Exeter or Plymouth, with differing styles and roof lines in blocks of buildings.[762] The issue of architectural control has become significant in all reconstruction literature, from planning history to

[762] See Appendix D, figs.11-12, 14 & 16 for examples

architectural criticism, as the prominent role of multiple stores and development companies in rebuilding blitzed cities is thought to have compromised the architecture, particularly where no supervising architect was appointed to oversee the work. Even where co-ordinating architects were employed, such as in Plymouth, there is some criticism that the process compromised the quality of design, as referred to by Essex and Brayshay.[763] However, the two cities did have more control over the designs than is acknowledged, particularly in Exeter.

Exeter City Council did not employ an external architect to design the city centre buildings, with firms instead using their own in-house architects to produce building designs. This approach has led to some criticism of the process, as it has been assumed that the Council therefore had little control over the design of buildings. Tait and While refer to the 'piecemeal' approach to Exeter's architecture, which led to criticisms of a 'bland, anywhere' design. [764] However, all the firms building in Exeter received a building brief from the City Architect laying out the design principles for each group of buildings, to which their in-house architects were expected to adhere. This brief was written into the site leases, meaning that the acceptance of the lease was also the acceptance of the City Architect's design. The building designs produced by the firms' architects against this brief had to be submitted to the City Architect for approval before building could commence, ensuring architectural harmony and conformity across the rebuilt area.[765] This process gave Exeter City Council particularly strong architectural control and created a more uniform end product than in the other South Western cities. It also saved the

[763] Essex & Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interests and Pragmatism', pp.432-433.
[764] Tait and While, 'Exeter and Thomas Sharp's Legacy', pp. 87, 92.
[765] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1, 2 & 3 1948-1950; Exeter City Council Minutes; See Appendix F for photographs of rebuilt centre.

city the expense of employing a co-ordinating architect, as the City Architect and his staff could oversee the process more easily and did not have to spend time redesigning buildings, as seen in Plymouth. If a firm did not conform to the design brief, the City Architect's staff just had to refer them to their lease agreement, where it was set out.

Regardless, some firms did try to impose their own architectural brands on Exeter, most notably Burton's. Alongside the long-running dispute over sites and leases described in Chapter Four, Burton's were also involved in a long dispute over the architectural treatment of their new building. Burton's was keen to use its own in-house style for the new building, which, in common with many other cities, Exeter City Council was keen to avoid.[766] As the building brief had been written into the lease, the City Council was able to overcome the objections by stating that if Burton's continued to refuse to fit the brief, the Council would consider it a refusal of the lease and offer the site to another firm.[767] They did make some concessions to Burton's objections, reducing a set-back on the upper floors of the building and agreeing that Burton's did not need to build complete basements for the adjoining shops to let, but were able to keep the overall design intact.[768]

The construction of Ravenseft's Group 11 on the High Street further demonstrates the efficiency of the lease-design system. Ravenseft were also unhappy about the design brief they'd been supplied with, which demanded a zig-zig detailing to the first floor and decorative stone relief panels to break up the frontages

[766] DHC, 5896 City Architect's Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Notes re elevation control for Burtons, undated c.1949;
[767] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 – Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1, 2 & 3 1948-1950: Letter from Town Clerk to Burton's re architectural treatment and lease, 1 July 1948.
[768] DHC, 5896 City Architect's Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1, 2 & 3 1948-1950: Letter from City Architect to Burton's re facade set-back, 5 March 1949; Letter from Burton's to City architect re facade set-back, 28 March 1949.

of the block. Furthermore, the City Council had stipulated to Ravenseft a specific local brick-type that they wished the company to use. The bricks were more expensive than other more readily available types, much to Ravenseft's disgruntlement, and the company spent some time trying to persuade the City Council to drop the use of the local bricks.[769] Ravenseft went as far as to write to the MTCP to complain about the Council's demands, but were told by the Ministry that they must comply.

A further row with Ravenseft began as their buildings neared completion in 1953 and the questions were raised regarding the decorative stone panels and the ongoing maintenance of an arcade connecting the High Street and Princesshay. The development company was reluctant to go to the expense of providing the stone decorations and were adamant that the maintenance of the arcade (including provision of lighting) was the Council's responsibility rather than theirs as leaseholders.[770] Both battles were won by the Council, who demonstrated that both issues were included in the lease agreement.[771] Ravenseft passed the cost of the stone decorations onto their tenants, persuading them to provide the decorations as a way of branding the buildings and advertising their businesses.[772]

Ravenseft also built much of Princesshay, which was constructed in a simple brick style with arcading in front of some of the shops to provide protection from the elements. These buildings appear to have been constructed without conflict and

[769] DHC, 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 9, 10 & 11: Letter from Fewster & Partners to F.P.W Maynard re architectural treatment of group 11, 27 November 1952.
[770] DHC, 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 9, 10 & 11: Memo to Town Clerk re group 11 maintenance, 23 January 1953.
[771] See figs. 78 &79 for disputed detailing and arcades.
[772] DHC, 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 9, 10 & 11: Copy of minute sheet, 13 April 1953; These decorative panels are not present on the buildings today and don't appear to have ever been provided by the original tenants.

were completed by 1957. The difficulties with both Burton's and Ravenseft demonstrate the level of control which Exeter City Council had over the building designs. The decision to write the design briefs into the leases avoided the weakening of design as firms were unable to pressure the Council into accepting their own designs. As seen with Burton's, if a firm tried to pressure the Council into changing the design, the Council could refer to the terms of the lease and the consequences of not complying with them. The method also saved the Council the effort of designing and redesigning all the buildings, instead leaving it to the firms architects to undertake this work.

The north side of Exeter's High Street was the first area to be completed. Burton's, Lloyd's Bank, Westminster Bank, Pearl Assurance, Commercial Union and Marks and Spencer undertook the building of these groups, with the majority of firms working harmoniously with the City Council. [773] The groups built by the insurance companies, banks and Burton's were the first to be erected, with all buildings finished by 1953. Away from the High Street, work was beginning in Sidwell Street, Fore Street, Bedford Street and on the new pedestrian way of Princesshay.[774] Bedford Street was home to Exeter's investment banks, Martin's Bank and the Devon and Exeter Savings Bank. Banks of this type received allocations for rebuilding from a separate fund to general reconstruction work, which enabled these

[773] DHC, 5895 City Architect's Papers, Box 22, Dr Schwartz's Report and CARS: Planning Committee Officers Conference No.4, 7 June, 1949; Memorandum from Mr Redfern to City Architect re situation with sketch plans and discussions with lessees in central areas, 31 August 1949; See also 5896 City Architect's Papers, Box 23, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1, 2 & 3 and 5897 City Architect's Papers, Box 24, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8.
[774] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Planning Committee, 26 September 1950, 24 October 1950; *Express & Echo,* 'Building the New Exeter', 24 December 1952; 'Building Licences for 7 Projects in Business Centre of Exeter', 17 June 1953

firms to rebuild very quickly.[775] The two banks also built some additional premises for other businesses, mostly in the form of office space, and created the first part of the new Bedford Street. Other buildings earmarked for this area, including the Post Office, took far longer to complete with the new Post Office not becoming operational until 1958.

The south side of the High Street and the parallel section of Princesshay were started in 1951, with development company Ravenseft taking the lead with its High Street buildings.[776] The buildings on the north side of the High Street were slightly more ornamental than those on the south side, with a distinct Neo-Georgian styling in the windows and stone dressings of the buildings. The oblique building angles of the Westminster Bank and Marks and Spencer buildings provided some relief from the terraced design, while the detailing on the Pearl Assurance and Commercial Union buildings ensured that there was not monotony in the designs.[777] The south side of the High Street was simpler, but retained the same Neo-Georgian style with its regular windows and stone dressings. The oblique angles were repeated again at the corners of Bedford Street and Eastgate, again providing relief to the regular facades.[778] The building on the corner of Bedford Street, Group 8, has a distinctly Art Deco feel, as does the facade facing onto Catherine Street, demonstrating that there were other influences at work beyond the Georgian.[779]

[775] DHC, 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 9, 10 & 11: Letter from the MTCP Regional Controller to Town Clerk re trustee savings banks 30 December 1949; Letter from A.E Watson to R. M Challice re steel allocations for banks, 3 January 1950; Letter from Devon & Exeter Savings Bank Actuary to R.M Challice re steel allocations, 4 January 1950.
[776] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes; *Western Morning News,* 'The Main Street Scene is Changing', 4 August 1951.
[777] See Appendix F, figs. 59, 60 & 72.
[778] See Appendix F, figs. 58, 63 & 67.
[779] See Appendix E, fig. 67.

Plymouth's progress was even swifter than Exeter's in rebuilding, with the south side of Royal Parade, Old Town Street, Armada Way and New George Street all completed by 1955.[780] The buildings were all of a high quality, faced in Portland Stone and built in a Beaux Arts style with a nod toward the Modernist school of architecture. Plymouth has particularly suffered from the 'concrete' tag given to so much post-war building owing to the colour of the stone used, but concrete was rarely used in the city's reconstruction; stone is the dominant material.[781] Some of the buildings constructed in the later phases of reconstruction after 1955, such as the former Drake Circus precinct, were indeed concrete and it is probable that this gave the impression that the whole city centre was built in such a way.[782] As in Exeter the use of decorative panels and oblique angles add interest to the terraced facades. Plymouth also features a number of buildings with curving facades, reminiscent of the Georgian crescent, which help to break up the blocks of buildings and avoid monotony.[783]

The building of Armada Way opened up the proposed vista from North Hill to the Hoe, creating what has been described as 'the last great monumental street in Britain'.[784] The objections to the width of this new monumental boulevard lodged by traders and the Ministry of Transport were overcome by narrowing the street to 100 feet, which kept the planned vista and 'gateway' to the city, but helped overcome the

[780] Gould, *Plymouth,* pp.15-35.
[781] Hatherley, *A New Kind of Bleak*, p.180; This tag only occasionally appears in the literature but is a kind of 'received wisdom' amongst local people. The assertion that Plymouth is built of concrete has been observed by the author when giving talks to local groups and when participating in the Word Machine's oral history project 'The War in Plymouth: Destruction and A New Beginning' (see http://thewordmachine.org/portfolio-item/the-war-in-plymouth/).
[782] *Plymouth Live (Plymouth Herald),* 'The Golden Years When Tesco, John Conway, Arcadia and Foto First Ruled Drake Circus',6 March 2018 - https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/history/golden-years-tesco-john-conway-1271155, accessed on 25/5/2018. See Appendix E, fig.45 for example.
[783] See Appendix E, fig.32 for example.
[784] Hatherley, *A New Kind of Bleak,* p.180.

traders fears that it would create a barrier for shoppers across the middle of the new city centre.[785]

Plymouth City Council did not use the same device of writing the design briefs into their site leases, which meant that they did not have quite the same architectural control over the new buildings as Exeter City Council. Instead Plymouth City Council employed an external architect, William Crabtree, to oversee the construction process and ensure that all building designs were harmonious and complementary.[786]

Crabtree was recommended by Abercrombie as one of his protégées, demonstrating one of the few pieces of influence Abercrombie had over the finished architecture of the city. Crabtree quickly found the job overwhelming as he had to deal with the in-house architects of each firm separately and try to impose some sort of architectural unity across the various firms. He spent a lot of time re-designing the submitted buildings himself to the general brief provided by the City Council but still found it difficult to ensure that all designs were complementary.[787] Most notable was the slight clash of the designs for Plymouth's first flagship store, Dingles, and the Pearl Assurance building on the opposite side of Armada Way. The two buildings were very much 'anchor' sites, sitting on the junction of the two major new roads of Armada Way and Royal Parade and still dominate the street scene in this part of the city today. The two buildings are complementary in that they are both of a Beaux Arts design and are faced in Portland stone, but the emphasis of the Pearl building is

[785] Gould, *Plymouth,* pp.14-15; Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War-Damaged Plymouth 1941-1961', p.159;
[786] Gould, *Plymouth,* p.14; *Western Morning News,* 'Good Progress Towards Rebuilding Plymouth', 2 July 1949; '250 Houses at Efford', 29 November 1945.
[787] Essex & Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interest and Pragmatism', *Planning Perspectives,*

vertical while the Dingles building emphasis was horizontal.[788] While not immediately obvious to the casual observer, this oversight was noted by architects and the architectural press at the time and still creates a jarring note for those schooled in architectural design today.[789]

Interestingly, both buildings were designed by the same architectural firm of Burnet, Tait and Lorne, which was heavily involved with the rebuilding of Plymouth. Thomas Tait was appointed to Crabtree's architectural committee and had a role in approving the designs submitted for reconstruction.[790] Tait's influence can be seen in the buildings occupying the plots from the junction of Armada Way and Royal Parade to the junction of Royal Parade and Old Town Street, which took their cue from Tait's work and recommendations. Tait was also responsible for another building in this block, the Royal Assurance building on Royal Parade. This influence of Thomas Tait and the firm Tait, Burnet and Lorne is claimed to have created 'the grandest ensemble of early 'fifties buildings in the country'.[791]

Crabtree and his architectural committee did not find their task easy and had to fight battles with a number of the multiple stores, who wanted to use their own particular architectural 'brand' rather than conforming to the ideas set out by the City Council. Most notable was Burton's which, as in Exeter, fought a long battle with the City Council to be allowed to use their standard building design. The ongoing struggle led to delays in Burton's commencing building work and very much echoed the problems seen in Exeter.[792] It also seems that Burton's took a similar line to that

[788] See Appendix E, fig.26.
[789] Ibid; Gill, *Plymouth: A new history*;
[790] Jeremy Gould, 'Architecture in Devon 1910-1958' in Sam Smiles (ed.) *Going Modern and Being British; Art, architecture and design in Devon* (Exeter: Intellect, 1998), p.31.
[791] Ibid, p.31; See Appendix E, figs.26 & 29.
[792] Gill, *Plymouth: A new history,* p.204.

seen in Exeter over the building of proper basements in their new building. Exeter City Council had warned Burton's that the basement levels of the buildings which had formerly occupied their site pre-war had only been roughly filled in with blitz rubble and must be properly filled even if the firm insisted on not creating basements of their own. The City Council was evidently concerned that Burton's would build straight over the top, potentially leaving a void space underneath the building. It seems they might have been right to worry about this, as it appears that this was done in Plymouth. When the site occupied by the 1950's Burton building was levelled for the redevelopment of Drake Circus in 2004, a bulldozer fell into a void space underneath the building, suggesting that Burton's had not checked the soundness of the basement level before building.[793]

Bristol's progress in rebuilding was a little slower than that of Exeter and Plymouth and the city had rather weak control over rebuilding compared with the other cities. The long battle over the location of the shopping centre delayed the process of allocating sites and leases, which meant that the city was not quite so advanced in its preparation for building as Plymouth or Exeter. The result was a slower pace of building for the first two years of reconstruction, as site negotiations were still ongoing. However, the city did make up ground after 1953 with much of the first phase of Broadmead competed by the end of 1954.[794]

Bristol did not employ an architect to oversee the reconstruction designs, as Plymouth did, nor did they write the design briefs into the lease as Exeter did. Instead the design process was much more piecemeal with the City Architect

[793] This incident is remembered locally, including by the author, but as yet a newspaper reference has proved elusive.
[794] John V Punter, *Design Control in Bristol 1940-1990* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1990), p.36.

dealing with each firm and its in-house architects separately.[795] The result was a much less coherent overall design as the City Council was unable to withstand the pressure from the building firms to accept their building designs. Rather than hold up building further, the city accepted designs which were not quite as they would have liked, which produced a rather less polished aesthetic finish than in the other two cities. The City Architect generally managed to get firms to agree to certain finishes, such as the uniform Portland stone facing of the Horsefair and the brick and stone finish of Broadmead, and Merchant Street, which gives some unity to the buildings.[796]

However, the City Council found that it was not well placed to withstand the demands of some firms to use their own architectural brand, such as those used by Woolworths, Marks and Spence and, inevitably, Burton's. [797] Bristol appears to be the only city of the three where Burton's won their battle to be allowed to use their standard building design, although they evidently agreed to the City Architect's stipulations on finish, using a Portland stone facing. Woolworths also used a standard design for their store on Horsefair, although the City Council did manage to prevent them from erecting their standard red hoardings on the building. Signage was the only other area where the city was able to exert any real control, with firms agreeing to forego their usual signage in favour of more discrete signs.[798]

[795] BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/6 Bristol City Council Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 31st May 1950 – 2nd May 1951: Minute No.115 'Central Shopping Area. Dorothy Perkins', 28 June 1950; Minute No.166 'Central Shopping Area. Lease to Montague Burton's' and Minute No.167 'Central Shopping Area. Lease to Marks and Spencer', 12 July 1950; Punter, *Design Control in Bristol,* pp.36-38.
[796] See Appendix D, figs.6, 8,9 & 10.
[797] Punter, *Design Control in Bristol,* pp.36-37.
[798] Punter, *Design Control in Bristol,* pp. 36 & 38.

The work in the three cities was surprisingly free of the objections and complaints from traders and property owners which had so dominated the planning discussions of the 1940s. However, this can mostly be attributed to the resignation of traders to the leasehold system which came into being with reconstruction. By 1950 it was evident that no further assistance for reconstruction would be forthcoming from central government and that reconstruction would have to be undertaken at personal cost. The alternative was to accept a lease for a shop built by one of the banks, multiple traders or finance companies, which many blitzed traders chose to do.[799] The complaints about rents did trickle on into the 1950s, but again many traders reluctantly accepted the new status quo in order to continue trading.[800]

This situation becomes very obvious when the building work in the three cities is examined. Virtually all of the construction work was undertaken by large firms, with only a handful of independent firms appearing in the lists. The finance companies, in the form of the major insurance companies, dominated the scene as they both built and financed the bulk of the new premises. Pearl Assurance, Commercial Union and Norwich Union all built premises for themselves plus additional shops to let in all three cities.[801] In addition to this, these companies often provided the finance for developers and multiple traders to build as well. In particular Pearl Assurance

[799] DHC, 5896 City Architect's Papers, Box 23, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950: Memorandum re Lloyd's tenants, 1 & 6 November 1950; Central Areas Committee minutes 9 April 1951.
[800] DHC, 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25, Central Areas Reconstruction Group 10 1948-1950:Letter from Bobby's & Co to City Estate Surveyor re sites, 17 May 1950; 5898 City Architect's Papers, Box 25 Central Areas Reconstruction Group 11 1949-1952: Letter from W.H Julian (Pearl Assurance) to City Estate Surveyor re block 11, 17 December 1951.
[801] Land Securities Archive (LSA), Box 14277, Ravenseft Properties Ltd Minutes 1946-1951: Mortgage Agreement between Norwich Union and Ravenseft for Plymouth property, Old Town Street, 29 March 1951; DHC, 5895, City Architect's Papers Box 22: Dr Schwartz's Report and CARS, File No.3 Central Areas Reconstruction 1949: Central Areas Subcommittee Estate Surveyor's Report, 7 June 1949; BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/7 Bristol City Council Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 30 May 1951 – 29 April 1953: Minute no.554, Central Shopping Area – Disposal of sites to development corporations, 9 January 1952; *Western Morning News,* 'Good Progress Towards Rebuilding Plymouth', 2 July 1949; 'Plymouth City Centre Nears Completion' 9 April 1949.

provided the finance for the major development company of the post-war era, Ravenseft.[802] Multiple traders such as Marks and Spencer, Burton and Woolworths also appear regularly as the builders of additional shops to let, as do the major banks.[803] The banks also had further interests in blitzed city centres as they too provided additional finance to other firms. It is notable that Barclays and its sister bank, Martins Bank, provided the financial services to Pearl Assurance and by extension Ravenseft, making their interests in Britain's rebuilt High Streets extensive.[804]

The development company was essentially a post-war phenomenon as the opportunities presented by the reconstruction of blitzed cities became apparent. Within the records of all three of the South Western cities a company called Ravenseft appears as a post-war developer. Indeed, the name is common as the developer of blocks of shop units in most of Britain's major towns and cities; the firm is known today as Land Securities. Land Securities started as a conglomeration of small property developers, including Ravenseft, who specialised in buying or leasing bomb sites for redevelopment. Ravenseft eventually became the retail arm of Land Securities, with a sister company dealing in industrial and other commercial building. The companies were generally financed by the major insurance companies, such as Pearl Assurance and Legal and General, and used their built assets to secure

[802] LSA, Box 14277, Ravenseft Properties Ltd Minutes 1946-1951: Mortgage Agreement between Norwich Union and Ravenseft for Plymouth property, Old Town Street, 29 March 1951.
[803] DHC, 5896 City Architects Papers, Box 23 - Central Areas Reconstruction Group 1 1948-1950, Letter from Charles Ware & Son (Architects & surveyors) to Town Clerk re offer of leases in group 1, 28 October 1948; Lloyd's Archive, HO/D/Pre/34.0, Premises Committee Minute Book No.34 1946-1960 (C2818), Minute no.3062 'Plymouth, Devonshire', 18 June 1954.
[804] LSA, Box 00014249, Minute Book of Legal and General (Exeter) Ltd, 1958-1973; Box 14277, Ravenseft Properties Ltd Minutes 1946-1951.

further finance for further building.[805] The model was extremely successful and became the method for much of the city centre redevelopment seen in Britain since the Second World War.

The founders of Ravenseft spotted the potential gains to be made by building in blitzed cities after working with Coventry City Council on a block of shops. Approaches were made to Plymouth and Exeter City Councils in quick succession and the firm went on to build in Hull and Bristol as well as working on the New Towns of Harlow and Basildon, amongst others.[806] The model of leasing land from local authorities and building shops to let was profitable for companies like Ravenseft, eventually leading to the property boom of the 1960s.[807] Major developers such as Arndale emerged from the model created by the post-war developers, working with local authorities to redevelop city centres and areas of 'blighted' land.

As scandals began to emerge and the public became uneasy with the big developers, the narrative of 'big business' dominating post-war reconstruction and Britain's city centres emerged.[808] What had begun as necessity due to post-war economic constraints became a standard development model, creating the perception that the immediate post-war years of reconstruction had been a period of deliberate consolidation on the High Street by the major multiple retailers and development companies.

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[805] LSA, Box 00014249, Minute Book of Legal & General (Exeter) Ltd 1958-1973; Box 14277 Ranuc Properties Ltd Minute book 1952-1955; Box 14277 Ravenseft Properties Ltd Minutes 1946-1961.
[806] LSA, Box 14277 Ravenseft Properties Ltd Minutes 1946-1961, 29 March 1951; DHC, 5895, Architects Papers, Box 22, Dr Schwartz's Report and CARS, File No.3: Memorandum from Estate Surveyor's Office re Messers Louis, Freedman & Maynard, 22 September 1949 ; BRO, M/BCC/PREC/1/7 Bristol City Council Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes 30 May 1951 – 29 April 1953: Minute no.554, Central Shopping Area – Disposal of sites to development corporations, 9 January 1952.
[807] Oliver Marriot, *The Property Boom* (London, 1967), pp.74-81
[808] Marriot, Ibid;

This pattern of 'big business' taking on the bricks and mortar aspects of reconstruction is the foundation of the idea that the multiple retailers and national firms pushed out the 'little man' and the independent trader in rebuilt city centres.[809] Reconstruction plans are seen as the tool which allowed them to do this, along with the weakness of local authorities who, as we have seen, were painted as capitulating to the pressure applied by 'big business'.[810] While it is undoubtedly the case that city centre rebuilding was mostly undertaken by multiples and finance companies, it is obvious that this situation arose for a variety of reasons.

The independent local firms which did rebuild were all department stores, many of whom were later absorbed into national chains such as Debenhams and House of Fraser. In Exeter only Colson's rebuilt in the immediate post-war period.[811] Likewise, Bristol's major independent department store, Lewis's, took what would today be called an 'anchor' site in the new Broadmead shopping centre, apparently the only local firm to do so.[812] In contrast Plymouth saw several of its pre-war department stores accept sites and rebuild. Dingle's, Popham's, Spooner's and the local Co-Operative department store, Derry's, all built prominent new stores on Royal Parade.[813] The dearth of smaller firms actually rebuilding demonstrates just how much of an unattractive proposition the leasehold system was to independent traders. Although the building itself would remain an asset, firms were not prepared to take the risk of speculating against an uncertain return.

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[809] Hubbard, Faire & Lilley, 'Contesting the Modern City', p.39.
[810] Tait & While, Exeter and the Question of Sharp's Physical Legacy', pp.82; Essex & Brayshay, 'Planning the Reconstruction of War-Damaged Plymouth', p.159.
[811] DHC, 5895 City Architect's Papers, Box 22, Dr Schwartz's Report and CARS, File No.3: Memorandum from the City Planning Officer to the City Architect re 36 &37 High Street, 18 November 1949; *Express & Echo,* 'Two More Previews of the New Exeter', 13 March 1950.
[812] Jenner, 'The Origins of Broadmead Shopping Centre' in *Post-War Bristol 1945-1965: Twenty Years that Changed the City'* (Bristol Historical Society, 2000), p.19.
[813] Jeremy Gould, 'Architecture in Devon 1910-1958', p.31

This lack of local traders undertaking building work has been interpreted as a deliberate campaign by the multiple traders to squeeze out their smaller rivals, but an examination of the trade directories for pre- and post-war shopping districts show that the firms in question did not disappear.[814] Although the smaller traders did not build their own premises, the majority remained trading in the three cities but in rented premises.

This continuity is best demonstrated in Exeter, where the shopping district was very compact, making it simple to trace the movements of the city's businesses. Of the 28 firms placed in Group 1 on the north side of the High Street in 1953, 6 had been located there pre-war and 12 had been trading on different sites in the city, making ten newcomers.[815] It is notable that the majority of these new firms were not multiple retailers, but the administrative arms of manufacturing companies who let office spaces above the new shops. The retailers which let shops in this group were a mixture of local and national concerns, with only two new multiple retailers taking units. If one examines the make-up of that part of the High Street pre-war, it was occupied by 27 firms.[816] Out of the 21 firms which did not return to their former sites post-war, 14 can be found still trading in central Exeter in 1954, leaving only 7 unaccounted for.[817] The records do not survive to tell us the fate of these firms, but some Exeter firms did consider moving to nearby towns to continue trading after the blitz.[818] The records for Exeter City Council do suggest that some former city centre traders decided to open new businesses on the city's housing estates rather than

[814] Kelly's Directory of Plymouth and District 1939 (London: Kelly's Directories, 1939); Kelly's Directory of Plymouth and District 1955 (London: Kelly's Directories, 1955); Kelly's Directory of Bristol 1939 (London: Kelly's Directories, 1939); Kelly's Directory of Bristol 1956 (London: Kelly's Directories, 1956): Besley's Directory of Exeter and Suburbs 1941 (Exeter: Besley & Copp, 1940); Besley's Directory of Exeter and Suburbs 1954 (Exeter: Besleys & Copp, 1954).
[815] Besley's Directory of Exeter 1953; Besley's Directory of Exeter 1954
[816] Besley's Directory of Exeter 1941
[817] Besley's Directory of Exeter 1953; Besley's Directory of Exeter 1954
[818] *Western Morning News,* 'Shop Rents Grievance at Exeter', 7 December 1948.

continue with their former city centre trade, especially those specialising in 'domestic' trades such as tobacconists and grocers, which may account for some of the missing firms.[819] Others may have closed as part of the official contraction of trade seen in 1942 and chose not to begin trading again post-war.[820] This pattern is repeated across the city centre, with only a small number of firms vanishing between the destruction of the city in 1942 and its reconstruction in the early 1950s.[821]

A similar pattern can be found in both Bristol and Plymouth, suggesting that the major changes we do see on Britain's high street's was not the product of reconstruction.[822] Tracing Exeter's pre-war firms in the post-war era, it is notable that the major collapse of the independent stores begins much later in the 1960's and 1970's as the chain store became more fashionable.[823] It was not so much the actions of the multiple trader in reconstruction which led to the demise of so many local independent traders, as the change in shopping habits that led Britain's consumers to seek the branded product and the multiple store. This particular aspect of Britain's consumer habits and their impact on businesses and the High Street is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is an area that demands a more thorough examination than it has so far attracted.

The use of development and finance companies did, however, change the way in which city centre development was undertaken, as the model used for reconstructing blitzed cities has become the major method for urban redevelopment projects. All

[819] DHC, 5878 City Architect's Papers, Box 5, Aluminium Bungalows, BISF houses, Shops on Housing Estates: Shops on Housing Estates 1945-1948
[820] In 1942 the government sought to contract domestic trade in order to redirect resources to the war effort. Firms willing to close for the duration of war were offered compensation.
[821] Besley's Directory of Exeter 1941, 1950-1956.
[822] Kelly's Directory of Plymouth 1939, 1950-56; Kelly's Directory of Bristol 1939, 1951-53.
[823] Kelly's Directory of Exeter 1956-1973.

three cities have seen the redevelopment of some of the post-war building since 2004, with Princesshay in Exeter, Cabot Circus (formerly part of Broadmead) in Bristol and Drake Circus in Plymouth being redeveloped into new shopping centres. In all cases the sites were leased to a major development company which undertook the building and then let the units to other firms, just as was done post-war. Interestingly, the development companies were often the decedents of the post-war development companies, with both the Princesshay and Cabot Circus redevelopments being undertaken by Land Securities, the parent company of Ravenseft.[824]

The method of leasing land from local authorities and then either selling or letting the resultant buildings proved extremely profitable and was replicated in other building sectors, such as office building, throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The banks and insurance companies which financed the work of the development companies also saw the potential profits to be made from such projects and continued to finance development projects. The office boom in London, as admirably documented by Oliver Marriot in *The Property Boom*, created a new breed of property millionaires and helped to establish a plethora of development companies which built many of Britain's best-known shopping and business districts.[825] The Arndale Centre, Centre Point, Birmingham's Bull Ring and the original Elephant and Castle were all the product of such development companies and demonstrate the impact which the

[824] *BBC News,* 'Princesshay Opening', 7 September 2007 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/devon/content/articles/2007/09/07/princesshay_opening_feature.shtml, accessed 26/5/2018; See also Sir Robert McAlpine website - http://www.sir-robert-mcalpine.com/projects/index-id=5971.html , accessed 26/5/2018; *Europe Real Estate,* 'Bristol Alliance Announces 'Cabot Circus' Name for £500m Bristol City Centre Development (UK)' 27 February 2007 - a http://europe-re.com/bristol-alliance-announces-cabot-circus-name-for-163-500m-bristol-city-center-development-uk/31379 - accessed 26/5/2018;

[825] Oliver Marriot, *The Property Boom,* see chapters 6 and 8.

method of land purchase and lease to developers produced by reconstruction had on Britain's urban fabric.[826]

Outside the City Centre

Beyond the central areas rebuilding, progress was also being made in both industrial building and housing. Housing had always received a priority status and had progressed at a steady pace throughout the 1940s. However, the pace was not as fast as either the government or the public had envisaged, and the Labour government came under increasing fire from the Opposition on housing progress. The economic crises of the late 1940s and the severe winter of 1947 had both slowed housing progress, making Labour's housing programme more the victim of circumstance rather than a lack of will. Despite these setbacks, the Labour government still oversaw the building of approximately 900,000 houses between 1945 and 1951.[827]

Unfortunately demand outstripped supply and the Conservative government sought to capitalise on this, making an election pledge to build 300,000 houses per year.[828] This pledge helped them to win the 1951 election and led to a housing drive to ensure that the pledge was met. 1952 did not see the 300,000 target being met, but did see the machinery which would see its achievement put in place. A new housing bill was passed that created more generous subsidies for house building and methods were sought to reduce the use of still-scarce steel and softwood in house building. The latter involved the extension of non-traditional building methods, the

[826] Ibid, chapters 6 and 14.
[827] John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing,* p.277.
[828] *Times,* 'Call for 300,000 Houses a Year', 14 October 1950.

restriction of flat building and the reduction of housing standards in terms of size to save on materials. The reductions in space standards were sold as 'the people's house' – a simplified house plan which would provide unfussy, solid homes for working Britain.[829]

Although 'the people's house' was a Conservative concept, the foundations of the idea had been laid under the Labour government, with local authorities already being told in 1950 to make more use of terraced houses to save materials and costs. Local authorities were also advised to change house designs to create further savings, with lower ceilings being recommended as a method for this.[830] The housing output of Britain in 1953 exceeded the target, with 319,000 houses built and 1954 saw an extraordinary 348,000 houses completed.[831] The majority of these houses were still municipal houses with only a small amount of private building allowed. After 1954 the private building sector was unshackled as materials and investment became easier to obtain, aiding the process of providing new homes.

Within the three cities the impact of the Conservative housing drive can be seen, particularly in terms of the use of non-traditional housing in Plymouth and Bristol. All local authorities were expected to take a quota of non-traditional houses as part of their housing requests, which provoked mixed responses amongst the various local authorities. Exeter always viewed the quota as an imposition and comments about non-traditional houses being 'foisted' on the city can be found in the Council minutes and newspaper reports.[832] The city frequently haggled with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government over their housing quotas in an attempt to reduce the number

[829] Jones, 'This is Magnificent; 300,000 houses a year', *Contemporary British History,* p.111-112.
[830] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes, Housing Committee, 24 October 1950.
[831] Burnett, *A Social History of Housing,* p.277.
[832] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 27 April 1948; *Western Morning News,* 'Cornish Unit Houses 'Foisted' on Exeter' 28 July 1948.

of non-traditional houses. The Housing Committee stated that they had not found the non-traditional houses any quicker to build than traditional houses and that they were frequently more expensive to build as well.[833] Occasionally the Ministry relented and allowed them to swap some non-traditional houses for traditional, if local supplies of materials allowed. More often than not the city was told in no uncertain terms that it had to accept the houses or receive a reduced quota.[834] The later phases of the housing estates demonstrate the increased use of non-traditional houses with a number of types present, particularly the locally produced Cornish Unit and the British Iron and Steel Federation (BISF) house.

Exeter's reluctance to use the non-traditional houses stemmed from the experience of building with an Orlit pre-cast concrete system on the Pinhoe estate.[835] The city had utilised a similar system on one of its interwar estates, with the building of 200 Laings easiform houses, and had found them cost-effective and simple to build.[836] As a result Exeter was happy to experiment with a non-traditional system in the early years after the war. Unfortunately the Orlit system proved particularly troublesome, with the moulds for the precast sections frequently producing poor results and the concrete taking a long time to dry.[837] The houses took far longer to build than traditional houses as a result, making the city reluctant to use other non-traditional systems.

[833] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes, Housing Committee, 27 April 1945.
[834] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 27 April 1948.
[835] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes, Housing Committee, 20 September 1945.
[836] *Housing: Opening of the 2000th Post-War Municipal House* (Exeter: Exeter City Council, 1937), p.9.
[837] DHC 5858 City Engineer and Surveyor's Papers, Box 64 , POW Labour Accounts, Housing General Correspondence, Housing A.P.H.S, Accidents and Slum Clearances: Letter from City Architect to Orlit, 5 October 1946; Letter from City Architect to Orlit re defective beams 19 October 1946.

Non-traditional building also tended to cause tensions with the building trade, who saw the use of non-traditional building methods as an attack on their skilled profession, and Exeter saw a number of strikes by building operatives throughout the 1940s and early1950s.[838] In contrast Bristol and Plymouth used non-traditional methods extensively and were able to boost their housing output as a result. The push for increased housing output from 1951 also saw the embracing of flats and maisonettes as a housing type. Exeter particularly favoured low-level blocks of three stores composed of either six flats or two maisonettes and two flats. These were used as a way of providing smaller homes for newly married couples, single people and the elderly. In addition to this, Exeter also built a complex for elderly residents at the Stoke Hill estate, Toronto House. Toronto House was built from the Lord Mayor's Air Raid Relief fund to house elderly citizens who had lost their homes to the blitz.[839] The complex won awards for innovation, as did the housing estate it was placed on.[840]

Bristol used a mixture of pre-cast concrete systems, most notably Woolaway, Unity and Easiform as well as the BISF system. The Lockleaze and Lawrence Weston estates were built with a high proportion of non-traditional houses of this type and allowed the city to expand its housing stock at a fast pace.[841] Bristol also used flats more extensively than either Exeter or Plymouth, producing designs for large inner-

[838] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 28 January 1947; *Express & Echo,* 'Council Discusses Types of House', 28 April 1948.
[839] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 25 January 1949; Venning, *Exeter: The Blitz and Rebirth of a City,* p.77.
[840] *Express & Echo,* 'Building the New Exeter', 24 December 1952. Hazel Harvey, *The Story of Exeter* (Hampshire: Phillimore, 2011), p.188.
[841] Little, *City and County of Bristol,* p.345; *Western Daily Press,* 'New Type Houses for Bristol', 6 March 1946; 'Bevan's Ten Standard Types', 24 September 1946; 'House and Land Contracts Cost £330,000' 13 June 1947; 'Whitehall's 'Yes' to Tenders', 28 September 1948; '400 Cornish Houses for Bristol' 19 October 1948.

city complexes and a number of point-blocks in the early 1950s.[842] The use of flats was generally discouraged by the Conservative government as a way of conserving materials like steel, but they were permitted for inner-city housing. Bristol City Council put forward the use of flats for the central areas in 1949 and 1950 as a way of controlling urban sprawl. The high housing density at the centre of the city was translating into huge suburban estates and the city was keen to avoid perpetuating this as a housing model.[843] The experience of its huge interwar estates, particularly Knowle West, had made the city wary of having huge 'one class' estates, which it found difficult to manage.

There were also concerns about the distance which workers would have to travel to reach their jobs in the city centre, which made the building of some city centre housing all the more desirable.[844] The Redcliff area had been earmarked under the City Council's post-war plan for housing for 'key workers' and plans were made to built complexes of flats in this area. Similar complexes were built in the St Philip's area and the city later embraced the use of point blocks as a housing solution for its more densely populated areas.[845]

Plymouth had made use of non-traditional houses from the start, with extensive use of the Easiform pre-cast concrete system, the BISF system and the local Cornish Unit system.[846] Virtually all of the Whitleigh estate was built with non-traditional houses, as was much of the Honicknowle and Ham estates. The city continued to use non-traditional building methods on its later 1960s estates at Eggbuckland and

[842] Little, *City and County of Bristol*, p.318; *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol Flats Costly', 6 June 1950; 'The Answer', 5 December 1950.
[843] *Western Daily Press,* 'The Answer', 5 December 1950.
[844] *B24/7,* 'Tales of the Tower', Issue 24, September 2016, pp.15-16.
[845] Little, *City and County of Bristol,* p.345.
[846] Gould, *Plymouth,* pp.46-48.

Southway, demonstrating that the City Council found the non-tradition methods more satisfactory than Exeter City Council had. The city did not make as extensive use of flats as Bristol had, but the low-rise systems seen in Exeter could also be found in parts of the city.[847] Like Bristol, Plymouth's Housing Committee used flats for inner-city building in an effort to provide housing close to workplaces. Flats were common in the wards which had suffered the worst overcrowding during the interwar period, such as Vintry and St Peters, as a way of alleviating overcrowding and keeping workforces close to their employment.[848] The city did later make use of point blocks in the Devonport area, but these were not common with a total of three point blocks built in the early 1960s.

The estates of the three cities were all built along 'neighbourhood unit' lines which sought to produce self-contained communities grouped around schools and amenities. These amenities lagged behind house building, particularly the shops and leisure facilities, as they did not receive the same priority as the houses for materials and labour.[849] Licences for shops on housing estates began to be approved from 1950, although progress in this area was still slow. The majority of shopping parades on post-war estates were built as lock-up shop units with dwellings above as this made the most efficient use of the space.[850] Although it is not explicit in the surviving documents, it is also possible that including flats and maisonettes in the shop plans

[847] Hatherley, *New Kind of Bleak,* p.182.
[848] Gould, *Plymouth,* p.41; Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* pp.38-39.
[849] DHC, 5878 City Architect's Papers, Box 5, Aluminium Bungalows, BISF houses, Shops on Housing Estates: Shops on Housing Estates 1945-1948.
[850] *Western Daily Press,* 'Tour of Housing Estates', 24 June 1950; *Western Morning News,* 'Public Notices, City of Plymouth, Corporation Housing Estates, Shops to let at Hornchurch Road, Ernesettle' 31 August 1950; Efford Estate May Have 4 More Shops', 12 August 1950; DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, 24 April 1951.

made it easier to gain approval as it was adding to the housing drive and pushing up the figures for completed dwellings.

School building was one of the few areas where swift progress was made, particularly in terms of primary schools. Education was allocated a fairly generous budget in order to deliver the 1944 Education Act, with its extension of secondary education and division between the primary and secondary levels of education. New schools were required for the provision of the envisaged tripartite system of grammar, technical and secondary modern schools along with the division of education into primary (5-11) and secondary (11-15) schools in place of the old elementary schools. Neighbourhood planning called for local primary schools to serve the new estates, plus the provision of secondary schools which would serve more than one estate.[851] Plymouth serves as a particularly good example of the speed of this type of building, with both secondary and primary schools built and operational on the Honicknowle, Ham, Whitleigh and Efford estates by 1953.[852]

Other community facilities, such as churches, community centres, libraries and pubs, did not emerge as quickly. The provision of churches was not the direct responsibility of the local authority but the diocesan authority for each city. City Councils set aside plots of land for churches on their estates, but it was the responsibility of the church authorities themselves to build the new churches.[853] It is

[851] Richard Sheppard, *Building for the People* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), pp.67-68; Thomas Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* pp.116-119.
[852] Gould, *Plymouth,* pp.53-55; *Architects Journal,* ' Plymouth Reconstruction', 115/2989, 1952; *Western Morning News,* '£5,000,000 Vast Development Plan for Plymouth Education', 17 January 1946.
[853] DHC, 5858 City Engineer and Surveyor's Papers, Box 64 , POW Labour Accounts, Housing General Correspondence, Housing A.P.H.S, Accidents and Slum Clearances: Letter from Town Clerk to Rev. W Gabriel Harris (Exeter Diocesan Reorganisation Committee) re churches on estates, 8 May 1946.

notable that many post-war estates had churches of different denominations demonstrating both sensitivity to the religious make-up of each city and a concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the new estate dwellers. This feature is present even on some fairly small estates, such as the Pinhoe estate in Exeter. This was provided with a Catholic church, St Bernadette's, despite being an estate of only 300 houses.[854] The estate was attached to the village of Whipton, which already had a Church of England church and a Baptist chapel, and as such no further churches were built on the actual estate. Despite this, the estate of Whipton Barton, which was only separated from Whipton and the Pinhoe estate by a main road, was provided with a new Church of England church, St Boniface, and a Methodist church.

Evidently there was more concern about the spiritual wellbeing of the residents of this area compared with some of the other Exeter estates, as Countess Wear was not provided with a full-time church. Land was set aside on the estate for a church, but this was not built; instead a chapel was incorporated into the community centre building.[855] No other churches of any denomination were built on the estate, which is rather puzzling when compared with the generous provision of religious buildings in the Whipton area. Similar provision can be found on the post-war estates of both Bristol and Plymouth. Buildings for other religions were not provided, but it should be noted that Plymouth and Exeter did not have very diverse populations in the post-war period.[856]

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[854] According to one local resident, the church was provided due a large Southern Irish Catholic population residing in the city and little previous provision for worship. The church was paid for by subscription (as told by Joan Scott, former Whipton resident, June 2016).

[855] DHC, 5858 City Engineer and Surveyor's Papers, Box 64 , POW Labour Accounts, Housing General Correspondence, Housing A.P.H.S, Accidents and Slum Clearances: Letter from Town Clerk to Rev. W Gabriel Harris (Exeter Diocesan Reorganisation Committee) re churches on estates, 8 May 1946.

[856] Provisions for other religions are still notably lacking, with Exeter having the only purpose-built mosque in the South West peninsula. Plans for a Hindu temple were put forward in 2010, but the region still lacks such a building. All three cities had had synagogues since the 18th century and it was not felt necessary to provide further facilities as the Jewish populations were small.

Further community facilities such as pubs and community centres were built, but often did not appear until the late 1950s when building restrictions on all types of building were finally lifted. The provision of pubs was less pressing on some of the Plymouth and Exeter estates, as they were frequently attached to existing residential areas which already had such facilities. In Plymouth it had been a deliberate decision by Abercrombie and Paton Watson to attach many of their new estates to existing hamlets or estates in order to help create a sense of identity and community.[857] This also meant that existing facilities, such as pubs, could also be incorporated into the new communities. A similar pattern can be found in Exeter, with the Countess Wear and Pinhoe/Whipton Barton estates benefitting from existing pubs.

The provision of cultural facilities like libraries and cinemas was often written into the plans for post-war estates, but these were not always forthcoming.[858] Bristol performed the best in terms of library provision, with an eventual network of 28 branch libraries in the city.[859] The city evidently encouraged libraries on its estates, as the interwar estates were generally provided with libraries prior to 1939. However, the provision of libraries for the post-war estates took more time and the majority were built after 1960. Plymouth also provided its estates with libraries, although like Bristol these were built after 1960 with the new estates instead being served by a mobile library in the early years.[860] Exeter relied almost entirely on mobile services, with branch libraries not being provided to the estates at all. Some branch libraries

[857] Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth,* pp.78-79, 84.
[858] Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* p.120 *;* Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth,* p.81
[859] See Bristol City Council website, library services - https://www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/library-finder, accessed 27/5/2018.
[860] Exeter Central Library, Library Service Cuttings Books

were eventually opened on the outskirts of the city during the 1960s.[861] The plans for cinemas were dropped from virtually all estates, particularly as by the time such building could be considered, cinema going was suffering from the increasing popularity and availability of television. The growing popularity and access to television is underlined by the number of requests received by Exeter City Council from tenants during the early 1950s to be allowed to connect the property to rediffusion services.[862]

Overall the three cities did achieve their aim of building communities rather than just housing estates. The new areas were provided with the majority of facilities envisaged in the plans of the 1940s, although it did take some time to put all of these in place. What makes these estates stand out compared with their interwar counterparts and the private building of the mid-twentieth century is the attention paid to such facilities, which were often missing in the interwar estates. Likewise, privately built estates from the 1960s and 1970s also frequently lacked the service provision of their municipal counterparts. Exeter's estates were particularly notable for their careful layout, which sought to maintain the garden city ideals of the interwar period while using a less formal style of architecture and layout. The heavy use of traditional building methods added to the general charm of these estates, which were noted by the architectural community for their quality.[863]

The estates of Plymouth and Bristol sometimes lost some of the potential attractiveness owing to the heavy use of non-traditional houses and it is sometimes evident that the layouts were designed more for ease of building than aesthetic

[861] Exeter Central Library, Library Service Cuttings Books
[862] DHC, 5876 City Architect's Papers, Box 3, Street Files (tenants complaints etc) 1954-1956.
[863] Stoke Hill Estate won a RIBA award 1952- *Express & Echo,* 'Building the New Exeter', 24 December 1952.

effect. Parts of Plymouth's Honicknowle and Whitleigh estates were built with the same type of very wide, straight roads which were seen in the interwar estates, which can give them a rather austere feel. However, the use of non-traditional housing did allow the cities to build quickly and demonstrated that such methods could produce well-designed and generally pleasing houses. Their importance was in the normalising of such building methods, which were set to dominate the 1960s and 1970s. Wimpey in particular put the non-traditional house to great use with the pioneering of its 'no fines' concrete systems, used extensively by Coventry City Council.[864] The Wimpey method allowed the firm not only to build large numbers of houses for the public sector, but also for the private sector, making the company one of Britain's best-known house builders. The use of non-traditional houses for municipal housing allowed for innovation in building design and paved the way for the adoption of such methods on a massive scale in private and commercial building.

Reception of the New Cities

As the long-promised new cities began to take shape, opinions on the architecture and design started to flow. The reactions of the general public to the new city centres are quite difficult to judge as there are few sources which give a full picture of how citizens felt about them.

The opinions of the architectural and planning professions are easier gauge as views on the reconstructed cities appeared in both the professional press and the wider media. The reception of the newly built city centres was mixed, with the choice

[864] Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics,* p.74.

of architecture in particular often quickly drawing criticism. To some extent this reflect a growing trend toward Modernist architecture in Britain post-war, which meant that to the eyes of newly qualified architects the buildings of Bristol's Broadmead, Plymouth and Exeter were already outdated and old-fashioned as they went up. The few opinions from citizens which can be found suggest that, at least at first, the public reaction was positive and the new buildings were well thought of. Plymouth in particular drew praise from visitors and citizens who appreciated the expression of modern planning ideas and building design that the new city centre displayed. Plymouth's buildings were certainly the most Modern-inspired in terms of their architecture, although they also owed much to the American Beaux Arts movement of the early twentieth century. In contrast, Bristol seems to have been the least satisfactory of the three reconstructed cities, with criticism being drawn from all quarters with regard to architecture, planning and the decision to move the shopping centre.

The buildings of all three cities drew criticism for their architecture almost immediately, with condemnation in histories of all three cities published in the mid to late 1950s.[865] In addition to this, Exeter and Bristol found themselves under fire from architectural critics in the national newspapers; Plymouth was partially spared this owing to its radical approach to replanning which captured the imaginations of the critics.

Bryan Little's *The City and County of Bristol,* published in 1954, stated that the buildings of the new Broadmead were 'of a fearfully banal tameness and moreover combine to present a discordant jumble of mutually unmannerly

[865] Hoskins, *2000 Years in Exeter*; *Gill,* Plymouth: A new history; Little, *The City and County of Bristol*.

elevation'.[866] Little felt that they reflected the cautious nature of the big firms which had built them and found little to praise in their external appearance. Only one building, the Dolcis shoe store, drew praise from Little, although his description of it as 'challenging' could also be interpreted as damning with faint praise. In fact Little wasn't alone in his appreciation of this particular building, as a local architect also noted the Dolcis store as being one of the few of bold design at Broadmead.[867]

The national press skirted around the issue of Broadmead's architecture, choosing instead to focus on the level of trade in the new centre and the efficiency the new road systems would bring to the city.[868] Rather more damning was a piece in the *Manchester Guardian* which focussed on the wartime losses of the city and the City Council's failure to better preserve the surviving fabric of the old city. The new parts of the city are described as having 'blankly virtuous facades', rather echoing Bryan Little's assessment of the architecture as tame; the closest the piece comes to praise is in describing Broadmead as 'tactful'.[869] More recent accounts of the reconstructed city centre are also critical of the architecture, with the lack of architectural control by the Council blamed for the centre's poor design.

Bristol also suffered from a tendency to drop planning schemes before they were completed and embark on entirely new ones at regular intervals, resulting in the 'jumble' of buildings and styles described by Little. Owen Hatherley's *A New Kind of Bleak* highlights this tendency and its effect on the city to the present day. Hatherley

[866] Little, *The City and County of Bristol,* p.346.
[867] Punter, *Design Control in Bristol,* p.37.
[868] *The Times,* 'New Site for Bristol Shopping Centre', 26 September 1952*; The Financial Times,* 'Bristol's New City Centre', 17 March 1958.
[869] *The Manchester Guardian,* 'Falling Between the Past and the Future', 13 June 1957.

is as scathing of the Broadmead architecture as the contemporary voices and very much places the blame for this on the lack of architectural control.[870]

The level of trade described by the *Times* and the *Financial Times* certainly demonstrates the popularity of Broadmead with shoppers who, despite the blitzed traders' claims that they 'would not go' to the new centre, appear to have been eager to sample the new shops.[871] This is a pattern repeated in all three cities, as shoppers deprived of goods and choice for so long wasted no time in resuming their pre-war consumer habits.

The housing and industrial estates come in for higher praise, with Little in particular praising the housing estates. He praises schools built at Lockleaze and Southmead as particularly fine examples of modern technique, especially the 'really fine theatre hall' of the latter.[872] There is some indication of Little's architectural sensibilities in his comments on the complexes of flats under construction in the city, with a fifteen storey block being praised as 'of most architectural interest'.[873] Little reflects the sensibilities of many commentators on the reconstructed cities in that his tastes appear to be Modern, and therefore they find little to praise in the new cities of the early 1950s.

Exeter also suffered from criticism of its new architecture, with one particularly damning piece in the *Architects' Journal* from 1952 standing out above the others. The writer stated that the 'the designs tend to lack conviction and please few' as they did not follow a Modernist plan nor were they a pastiche or recreation of past

[870] Owen Hatherley, *A New Kind of Bleak,* p.138-139.
[871] *The Times,* 'New Site for Bristol Shopping Centre', 26 September 1952*; The Financial Times,* 'Bristol's New City Centre', 17 March 1958.
[872] Little, *The City and County of Bristol,* pp.319, 345.
[873] Ibid, p.318.

styles.[874] This assessment seems particularly unfair as the city had deliberately chosen a Neo-Classical style of building in order to echo some of the older parts of the city. The *Architects' Journal* did praise the city for the speed of rebuilding however and also had praise for the design of Princesshay. A response to this piece was featured in the *Express and Echo* several days later, stating that the citizens of the city would be disappointed to discover that their new city was not 'the last thing in Modernity' but was really 'architecturally old-fashioned'.[875] As the new buildings had been well-received locally, this comment seems particularly apt.

The *Echo* itself continued to praise the new city centre, with later articles describing the buildings as 'handsome up-to-date new shops'; evidently the opinion of outsider architectural critics were to be ignored.[876] The *Times* featured an article on the city centre a month later in September 1952 which was rather warmer about the rebuilt city overall, but still critical of the architectural choices made. The *Times* correspondent felt that Exonians might have preferred either a complete rebuilding of the Georgian city or 'a bold essay in open replanning' rather than the compromise they felt the rebuilding had become.[877]

Histories such as W.G Hoskins *Two Thousand Years in Exeter* continued this lament for the lost city and the decision to build afresh rather than rebuild the former city.[878] The removal of some standing buildings in order to execute the road plans came in for particular criticism from Hoskins and he became active within the newly-created Exeter Civic Society in an attempt to protect other buildings from the same fate.

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[874] As quoted in the *Express and Echo,* 'Designs of the new Exeter please very few say critics', 27 August 1952.
[875] *Express and Echo,* 'Designs of the new Exeter please very few say critics', 27 August 1952.
[876] *Express and Echo,* 'Building the New Exeter', 24 December 1952.
[877] *Times,* 'Exeter Old and New', 23 September 1952.
[878] Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter,* p.142

Hoskins later stood as a local councillor to further this work when the redevelopments of the 1960s began.[879]

Exeter's attention to detail in terms of architectural control, however, appears to have been vindicated as the city was not accused of having weak architectural control over the new city centre. The uniformity and harmony of the High Street design was commented on by the *Times* article.[880]

Plymouth found general praise for its bold approach to reconstruction, with the city centre praised as a fine example of modern planning. Crispin Gill particularly praised the plan in his 1979 history of the city, noting that the city had been built with few departures from the 1943 plan.[881] This is the element which makes Plymouth stand out amongst the blitzed cities as it was one of the few which actually built according to the original plan. The City Council was remarkable in weathering the criticisms and delays faced in rebuilding and producing a city centre which looked like the drawings found in *A Plan for Plymouth*. This is all the more noteworthy when set against the financial problems surrounding reconstruction and the fact that the Chamber of Commerce continued to contest the plan until 1953.[882] The latter point is interesting when it is considered that the major Plymouth department stores all supported the reconstruction, and even built their own stores in some cases. As with Bristol, the footfall in the new centre vindicated the City Council's choices, but this could not allay the bitterness felt by some traders at the loss of their freehold sites.

[879] Exeter Civic Society website - https://www.exetercivicsociety.org.uk/plaques/wghoskins/ (access 25/5/2018).
[880] *Times,* 'Exeter Old and New', 23 September 1952.
[881] Gill, *Plymouth: A new history,* p.205.
[882] Essex & Brayshay, 'Boldness Diminished? The Post-War Battle to Replan a Bomb Damaged Provincial City', *Urban History,* 35/3 (2008), p.461.

Conclusions

The early 1950s were a period of swift progress for the blitzed cities, with city centre reconstruction finally allowed to begin in earnest. As controls on building were lifted, housing was also able to progress with alacrity, with the new communities around the three cities taking shape. In addition to housing, community facilities such as schools and churches also began to be built, giving the new communities a focus. Yet this progress was still being hampered by government restrictions on materials and investment, making the speed with which the first shops of the new city centres were erected all the more remarkable.

The influence of the Investment Programmes Committee on reconstruction has only recently begun to be acknowledged. The IPC's policies for economic development and its power to restrict investment make it the most influential body on city centre reconstruction. Through the IPC the building licence system restricted what could be built, with priority reserved for industries that benefited the export market. As such, IPC policy helped to ensure that blitzed cities could not rebuild for half a decade after the end of the war. The exposure of the workings of this committee changes the narrative of reconstruction, as the long period between Blitz and rebuilding had been attributed to the prevarication of local authorities. However, the restrictions of the IPC demonstrate that local authorities, and even the MTCP, had little influence over the pace of reconstruction. Allocations made to blitzed cities were deliberately kept small, with priority given to virtually all other areas of building ahead of blitzed cities. In addition to controlling materials, such as steel, the IPC also controlled private investment in building. This further restricted reconstruction, as even the businesses with the money to proceed, such as the multiple stores and investment

companies, could not spend freely. These restrictions demonstrate that even if blitzed cities had abandoned their plans and allowed rebuilding along old lines, rebuilding would not have progressed any faster as the constraints on building were not due to reconstruction plans but government economic policy. The pace of building in cities such as Portsmouth, where the reconstruction plan was virtually abandoned, demonstrates this point, as building progressed no faster than in the three cities.[883]

Despite these restrictions, the three South Western cities still started rebuilding their city centres in earnest in 1950 and 1951, with the first stores in Exeter and Plymouth finished by the end of the latter year. The cities were also able to retain architectural control, with the designs for the buildings a deliberate choice rather than a necessity produced by austerity. Exeter's ingenious use of architectural briefs written into the leases demonstrates just how closely local authorities could control their post-war architecture. It also demonstrates that the apparent lack of a supervising architect did not mean that a local authority had weak architectural control, as this could be exercised by other means. At present it is not known whether any other blitzed city employed such a method for controlling building and this is an area which would benefit from further research. Certainly the methods used by Bristol, Plymouth and other blitzed cities, such as Southampton and Coventry suggest that few other local authorities took this approach. Plymouth retained architectural control through the use of a supervising architect, but this still occasionally produced minor architectural oversights. Bristol had the loosest control of the three cities, but still managed to retain some harmony in the Broadmead centre with through the use of materials.

[883] Junichi Hasegawa, 'The Reconstruction of Portsmouth in the 1940s', *Contemporary British History,* 14/1 (2000), pp.45-62.

The three cities demonstrate that the assumption that ‘big business’ was able to dictate the architectural finish of the rebuild cities is inaccurate at best. Some businesses, notably Burton’s, did attempt to force their own architectural brand onto the three cities, but the controls in place meant that the cities were mostly able to resist such pressures. Bristol was the only exception to this, and it could be that the long delays in starting rebuilding were a factor in their capitulation to some trader demands. The wrangling with the MTCP delayed reconstruction and it may be that Bristol City Council was unwilling to become involved in long disputes with traders over building designs and further delay building.

The presence of ‘big business’ as a reconstruction force was considerable however, with the majority of reconstruction work being undertaken by the finance companies, multiple traders and the newly emerging development companies. The reasons for this dominance in reconstruction were explored in Chapter’s Three and Four, but the significance of their involvement becomes clear in the period covered by this chapter. The process of leasing sites and using the buildings to generate an income became the model for city centre development for the rest of the twentieth century, stemming from the post-war reconstruction of blitzed cities. The restrictions on materials and investment gave these companies their opportunity, with companies such as Land Securities still having large stakes in blitzed cities. The changes in land tenure and Britain’s post-war economic policy, with its attendant restrictions on the reconstruction process, changed the face of development and ownership in the cities. It also allowed construction companies such as Laing and McAlpine to become a major force in post-war Britain, as these firms conceived and developed new building systems which were utilised in both domestic and industrial building, including city centres. The development of non-traditional houses and their

utilisation on the municipal estates of cities like Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth led to their refinement and acceptance. The private estates of the late 1950s and 1960s used such systems, with Wimpey being the best known. Without the need to save materials and build large numbers of municipal homes, these systems may not have become so established. They allowed the three cities to complete their wartime housing plans and remove the slum areas which had existed around the city centres.

The initial reception of the rebuilt city centres does demonstrate the turn in opinion which came quickly after 1955. The architecture of Bristol and Exeter was quickly thought of as outdated and old fashioned, as the new young architects and engineers of the post-war era came to the fore. The City Engineer of Exeter, John Brierley, was one such person, stating that the architecture of the 1950s was a compromise that pleased no-one.[884] The quality of Bristol's buildings was questioned, with the Neo-Georgian style thought of as bland. This description has dogged post-war architecture throughout the following decades, with few appreciating the understated buildings of the period. The period of Modernism and Brutalism which followed, finding its best expressions in the National Theatre, the Barbican and numerous educational buildings, was a reaction to this perceived blandness. In Plymouth the Civic Centre expressed the move toward a starker, bolder architecture, while in Exeter the understated Modernism of the Central Library and the interior of St Georges Hall were followed by the bolder vision of Bobby's department store. All of these buildings were building the late 1950s to mid-1960s, demonstrating how quickly the buildings of the immediate post-war aesthetic fell out of favour. Despite this, they were on the whole well executed with thought and care,

[884] John Brierley, 'Exeter, The Reconstruction of a City 1939-1965',(unpublished MA Thesis (Architecture), University of Manchester, 1980), p.173-174

especially when the constraints placed on local authorities and those who built for them are considered and evaluated.

‘The last thing in Modernity’? Outcomes and Conclusions

This thesis set out to re-analyse the conventional narrative of post-war reconstruction through the experience of the three South Western cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. The reconstruction process had been characterised as top-down, driven by political ideology and architecturally unappreciated by the citizens of blitzed cities. This thesis sought to re-examine these assertions and to assess whether the emerging picture of economic constraints played a greater part in the process of reconstruction than previously acknowledged. In addition to this, the pre-war development of planning was examined in each city in order to assess the continuity between pre and post-war urban planning in each city and the continuity in the political landscape. This extended view of reconstruction has given an overview of urban planning across more than a century, from the earliest public health act of 1848 to the first wave of city centre reconstruction up to 1955 and demonstrated the continuity of urban improvement throughout this period.

Through the study of the three South Western cities, this thesis has demonstrated that post-war planning was not a top-down process. The three cities all consulted with blitzed traders, property owners and citizens on the future shape of the cities. All three cities surveyed trader needs for the post-war city, although traders themselves did not always respond, and tried to plan according to the replies. Citizens were encouraged to forward their own views and the exhibitions of plans in the three cities were used as an opportunity to gather feedback on the proposed reconstruction. The assertion that reconstruction plans were the expression of ‘the

planners' will or 'eye view' has also been proved to be an exaggeration at best, with the consultant planners of Plymouth and Exeter having no input into the actual building process.

The later criticisms of the plans, which have previously been viewed as a demonstration of the 'top-down' nature of planning, have been traced to the clauses within the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 dealing with compensation and land ownership. This thesis has demonstrated that the decision not to make the Cost of Works payments mobile in cases of replanning was a deciding factor for blitzed traders and property owners' support of reconstruction plans. Likewise, the decision not to allow local authorities to sell back land to former owners once replanning was complete, instead offering only leasehold tenure for land, diluted support for replanning as traders were unwilling to invest in leasehold property. The calls to be allowed to rebuild on former sites were due to these two clauses, rather than any deficiency in the plans.

This thesis has also demonstrated that the post-war economic climate of Britain was responsible for the slow pace of building, and the further dilution of support for replanning as a result, rather than any specific political ideology. The constraints placed on blitzed cities in terms of building were directly connected to the economic crises of the late 1940s and the subsequent economic policies to drive exports over home consumption. The political continuity in terms of local authorities has also been unpacked, with the influence of pre-war planning and the continuity of both council members and staffs acknowledged. This continuity has previously been overlooked, but this thesis has demonstrated that the reconstruction plans of blitzed cities were a continuation and evolution of planning ideas and practice gained since the turn of the century.

Continuity between pre and post-war planning

The post-war reconstruction plans of blitzed cities have often been examined in isolation with little consideration for planning and urban development during the interwar period. Reconstruction plans emerge as stand-alone grand schemes which bear little relation to the pre-war conditions in the cities and have been considered the expression of a town planners ideal rather than a response to existing problems and conditions.[885] The examination of the pre-war development of the three South Western cities has demonstrated that the post-war reconstruction plans were not just a reaction to war damage, but were a continuation of pre-war city development. The steady expansion of both public health legislation and concerns over the conditions of towns throughout the nineteenth century led to a series of interwar improvement and development schemes. Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth all undertook large-scale housing projects between 1920 and 1939, building extensive municipal estates to house their working class populations. The cities were also embarking on slum clearance schemes to tackle the remaining areas of overcrowding and poor housing at the outbreak of war in 1939. The impetus for these projects stemmed from the pre-1914 reports into the conditions of housing, which in turn had been fuelled by the public health and sanitation concerns of the Victorian era. The First World War proved a turning point in housing and planning evolution, as the condition of fighting men reinforced the need to tackle the causes of poor health amongst the working classes. The 'Homes Fit for Heroes' campaign combined with the subsidies and

[885] David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives,* 26/2, (2011), pp.237-260; Alison Ravetz, *Remaking Cities*; Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* (London: Hilary Shipman, 1985)*;*

legislation of the interwar period gave local authorities the tools they needed to tackle such problems in earnest. The alacrity with which all three cities did this demonstrates the widespread concern at urban conditions, with the cities making good use of the available legislation and funding. Even as the subsidies were reduced, the cities did not reduce their housing programmes significantly, but pressed forward to produce as many homes as possible. The experiences of the interwar years informed the reconstruction plans of the three cities, with lessons being learned from the interwar estates. Bristol had found its approach to housing was not been as successful as hoped, with the experience of the Knowle West estate informing their post-war estate design.[886] The Knowle West estate had been the largest of the city's interwar estates and had proved difficult to manage as a result. The City Council also felt that such large estates did not provide the social life and amenities which residents required, and also presented problems with the distances which workers had to travel for their jobs.[887] These concerns were fed into the post-war housing schemes, with estates planned with full amenities and consideration for the proximity of jobs. Similar concerns occupied Exeter and Plymouth, with all of the post-war estates designed with the same issues in mind.

The post-war estate design in the three cities also drew on the interwar developments in town planning, embracing the concept of 'neighbourhood units' as a way of tackling the problems of the interwar estates. The estate plans of the *Plan for Plymouth* particularly demonstrate this, with the designs for estates laid out in detail. The estates were to be built around amenities such as schools, which would serve a specific population. These were not just to be estates, but communities, with Paton

[886] *Western Daily Press,* 'Bristol's Post-War Housing Plans', 21 October 1943
[887] Ibid.

Watson and Abercrombie wherever possible trying to build these new communities into existing areas which already had their own identity.[888] There was also a concern to design estates in a more aesthetically pleasing way, as the interwar estates had sometimes verged into the austere, and with a more mixed population in mind. The wide streets and Neo-Georgian architecture of the interwar estates was dismissed in favour of a more village-like style of layout. The architecture was to be friendlier, returning to the Vernacular-inspired buildings which had been used immediately either-side of the First World War. Careful attention had also been paid to the wants of potential residents, so that upstairs bathrooms, separate toilets, storage space and parlours were now standard in all homes. These features had been argued over in the inter-war period, with the provision of parlours in particular causing much debate. It had become accepted that a parlour was not a luxury, but a necessary part of good house design, giving residents a quiet room for study, recuperation, business and the receiving of guests. The provision of the other features was the product of surveys of existing tenants, who reported what was good, bad and indifferent about the houses. Interwar studies of housing more generally had helped inform the post-war design of houses, culminating in the 1944 *Design of Dwellings* handbook which laid out the principles of good house design for local authorities.[889] There was an attempt to cater for different classes of resident, with the intention that estates would have a range of homes suitable for different age groups and incomes.[890] In reality the housing shortage of the post-war years meant that the emphasis was on three-bedroom family homes, with little else built initially on the estates. However, smaller flats and retirement developments were added, particularly after the building restrictions were lifted in 1954. Exeter built Toronto

[888] Paton Watson & Abercrombie, *Plan for Plymouth,* p.78-79.
[889] *Design of Dwellings* (London: HMSO, 1944)
[890] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee Special Meeting, 22 January 1946.

House on the Stoke Hill estate for elderly residents, while Plymouth built similar developments on its Ernesettle and Whitleigh estates.[891]

The planning of estates as 'communities' has been criticised as social engineering, with the estates viewed as an expression of 'top down' planning. The concept of the 'planners eye view' is invoked, with Peter Larkham, Alice Coleman and Lyndsey Hanley particularly highlighting this idea.[892] However, this concept is partially driven by the social problems experienced by municipal estates during the 1970s and 1980s. It has been assumed that the design of the estates was at fault and that this was responsible for creating anti-social behaviour.[893] As a result, post-war estates have attracted the tags of 'sink estates' and 'dumping grounds', with the solution thought to be the redevelopment of the area.[894] Plymouth has seen such redevelopment in recent years, with the partial rebuilding of the North Prospect estate in an attempt to resolve the issues the area has faced.[895] What is overlooked in the majority of the literature is the root of the problems the estates faced, which was almost always economic rather than architectural. The areas which have gained the tag of 'sink estate' are almost always those which are worst-placed to withstand economic downturns, with residents often those in the most economically vulnerable jobs. The design of municipal estates was taken and replicated in privately built and owned estates post-war, reaching its peak in the New Towns. These do not suffer

[891] Gould, *Plymouth: Vision of a Modern City,* p.53; Venning, *Exeter: Blitz and Rebirth of the City,* p.77.
[892] Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* (London: Hilary Shipman, 1985)*;* Lyndsey Hanley, *Estates: An intimate history,* (London: Granta Books, 2007).
[893] See Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* for examples
[894] See David Cameron's 2016 press release for the most recent iteration of this concept - https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/estate-regeneration-article-by-david-cameron (accessed 25/5/2018)
[895] Plymouth City Council - https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/home/homesandproperty/ourplanshousingandhomes/housingregeneration (accessed 25/5/2018); *Gardian,* 'Send More Rich People! The reinvention of the once-great Naval city of Plymouth', 4 November 2015

from the same level of problems as the municipal estates, as residents are better placed to weather economic storms. It is also notable that some developments dismissed as intrinsically bad by design, such as Erno Goldfinger's Trellick Town in London, have been rehabilitated by a move into private ownership in recent years.[896] The lesson of the interwar years has not been entirely learned; that single-class estates can lead to social problems, and that poverty itself is the root of the majority of problems.

It was not just the housing estates of the post-war years which built on the lessons and developments of the interwar period. The reconstruction plans of the three cities also tackled issues such as traffic congestion, overcrowding of buildings, and poor industrial location and provision. All three cities had traffic problems pre-war, with each claiming to be the most congested city in the South West. The narrow medieval streets of central Bristol were not designed for the volume of traffic they now carried, while Plymouth's difficult cross-city route caused the city streets to jam. Exeter still had the main south-west trunk roads coming directly through the city centre, although some relief had been obtained by the building of the A30 bypass road in the 1930s. However, the majority of traffic still came through the High Street, which like Bristol's narrow streets could not cope with such high traffic volumes. The three cities had been creating plans to tackle this issue during the interwar period, with plans for new bypass roads and ring roads to carry traffic away from the city centre. Bristol's Temple Way was to be part of a larger road scheme, while Exeter was beginning to build bypass roads around the city.[897] Plymouth too was looking to

[896] Barnabus Calder, *Raw Concrete: The beauty of Brutalism* (London: Heinemann, 2016) p.81
[897] DHC, 6142, Exeter and District Town Planning Scheme (Town and Country Planning Act 1932) 1936; BRO, M/BCC/PREC1/1 Planning and Reconstruction Committee Minutes, 'Supplement to the City Engineers Interim Report on Major Road Proposals', p.2

create bypass routes, with road schemes which also doubled as work-creation projects.[898] The road schemes contained in the post-war plans were therefore another point of continuity, with the war damage providing the best opportunity to relay roads and relieve the traffic problems of the past. Exeter had been trying to effect such changes pre-war, with attempts to change the road layout in the city centre in order to make junctions and streets safer for both pedestrians and drivers.[899] This is highlighted with the post-war design of streets such as Bedford Street, which was explicitly stated to be in response to the pre-war danger the junction had presented. Bristol too had tried to alleviate similar problems pre-war, with work on dangerous junctions dating back to the Edwardian era and changes made to the junction of Wine Street.[900] The road plans of the post-war years were a response to these interwar problems, with the opportunity to rebuild anew offering the chance to entirely relay streets and alleviate the problems.

The location of industry was also given careful consideration in the post-war plans, with new industrial estates created in all three cities under their plans. Bristol was keen to see industry moved away from the city centre, as some industries were considered a nuisance from the point of view of air pollution and smells. By relocating industry, housing conditions and overcrowding could also be tackled more effectively, as the new industrial estates could be placed within convenient distance of the new housing estates. This would ensure that workers could be better housed, but would not have long distances to travel in from the suburbs to work. In Exeter, the relocation of the industrial area around the river was intended to allow the

[898] PWDRO, 3133, Plymouth City Council, The City of Plymouth Planning Scheme No.1, 1937.
[899] DHC, Exeter City Council Minutes: Housing Committee, Special Meeting - Exeter & District Town Planning Area, 28 July 1925
[900] John V Punter, *Design Control in Bristol 1940-1990* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1990) pp.23-24.

opening up of the riverside as a leisure area. However, as in Bristol, by moving industry to a new site further away from the city centre nuisances such as smoke could be reduced. The creation of a second industrial area on the east side of the city was intended to spread industry across the city, again with the journeys of workers in mind. Plymouth's industrial provision was more limited and reflected the reliance of the city on the dockyard as an employer. The planned expansion of the dockyard was incorporated into the plan, allowing for new housing and new sites for Devonport shops and businesses to be built to house those displaced by the Admiralty's decision. Apart from this, no real changes to Plymouth's industrial areas were planned, with only one new industrial site at Marsh Mills provided. The dominance of the dockyard as an employer was expected to continue, so the provision of houses and amenities for these employers was considered adequate by Paton Watson and Abercrombie.

The post-war plans of the three cities were therefore not just a response to war damage, but part of a continuous process of development and planning in the three cities. The experience gained in planning during the interwar years was invaluable for reconstruction planning, informing how issues such as housing and traffic were tackled. By recognising the continuity between pre- and post-war planning, we can develop a better understanding of post-war reconstruction plans and their aims. Post-war reconstruction plans are often presented as 'idealist' and the 'planners-eye-view' of a modern city, but with a longer view we can see the full picture of the problems those plans were tackling beyond simple war damage. With this full view, the comprehensive nature of post-war reconstruction plans can be fully understood

and appreciated as a response to interwar problems as well as war damage, and look more practical and less idealised.

The long view also equips us with an appreciation of the development of planning and public health legislation, helping us to understand why the post-war planning legislation was written as it was. The 1944 and 1947 Acts were not just the response to war damage, but were also trying to encompass tools for dealing with the legacy of previous attempts to create a planning framework. The previous planning and public health acts had attempted to deal with problems such as slums in a non-compulsory manner which left private property rights intact. This approach had not been successful, as it did not tackle the worst problems of housing and neglectful landlords, nor did it allow local authorities to tackle other nuisances such as traffic, urban sprawl and air pollution effectively. The planning acts of 1944 and 1947 had to tackle these problems as well as the immediate problem of war damage. The dissolving of the automatic right of landowners to develop land under the 1947 Act, and the right of local authorities to compulsorily acquire land for redevelopment under both acts, were important steps towards the control of urban problems. Again, the current literature on reconstruction does not always acknowledge these issues or the complexities and difficulties surrounding land ownership that reconstruction planning had to deal with; the long view provides the context we need.

‘The Planners’ and Public Consultation

The concept of 'the planners' and the 'planners eye-view' appear regularly in the existing literature, with reconstruction planning depicted as a remote process which did not engage with local people.[901] 'The planners' emerge as a somewhat amorphous group, without any clear indication of who 'the planners' were. It is not clear if this term refers to the consultant planners employed by local authorities such as Plymouth and Exeter, or if it refers to all local authority staff involved in planning. The term tends to suggest the professional planners, but seems to include the City Engineers and City Architects that were common to most local authorities as well. This group are suggested to have disregarded local opinion in reconstruction planning, with plans dismissed as unrealistic and utopian. Peter Larkham suggests that the professionally produced plans of cities such as Plymouth and Exeter were over-idealised propaganda, intended to swell civic pride and importance.[902] Larkham also refers to the lack of a 'professional tendering' process for appointing consultant planners, suggesting that their employment was due to a network of personal contacts rather than any open and transparent public process of appointment. The insinuation in this is that the consultants employed were part of a closed system within which planning took place, making it remote from both the realities of local life and public opinion.[903] The examples of the three South Western cities demonstrate that reconstruction planning was not a top-down process as assumed, with plans created in isolation away from 'real-world' concerns.

[901] For example, David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the post-war reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives,* 26/2, (2011);
[902] Peter Larkham and Keith D Lilley, 'Plans, Planners and City Images: Place promotion and civic boosterism in British Reconstruction Planning', *Urban History,* 30/2, pp.183-205
[903] Peter Larkham, 'People, Planning and Place: The role of clients and consultants in reconstructing post-war Bilston and Dudley', *Town Planning Review,* 77/5, 2006, p.557

The three cities consulted extensively with interest groups, particularly in Bristol, throughout the planning process. Trader groups in all three cities formed their own committees for discussing reconstruction and fed their ideas back to the city councils' on a regular basis. In Bristol, the Traders Advisory Committee wished to be co-opted onto the council Planning and Reconstruction Committee to ensure full co-operation with trade bodies, a move which the Council resisted. This could be construed as an example of a local authority distancing itself from those who would be directly affected by reconstruction, but the decision was made for fear of vested interests overtaking the planning process. Up until this point, the Planning and Reconstruction Committee and the Traders Advisory Committee had worked closely together, but the decision not to co-opt members resulted in the relationship breaking down. In Exeter and Plymouth, the various trader groups were content to consult with the councils from a distance. Traders were surveyed in all three cities about their post-war needs, with the responses informing the eventual reconstruction plans. In Bristol and Exeter traders requested larger sites, which were accommodated within the plans, demonstrating how the opinions of traders could directly influence city plans.

In addition to working with trader groups, the three cities also approached other interest groups and the general public for ideas and opinions for reconstruction. Exeter City Council approached a wide range of city organisations, from cultural groups to women's organisations. Additionally in 1942 and 1943 they called for Exonians to put forward their ideas, welcoming complete plans as well as general suggestions. Full plans were created by a number of interest groups and at least one individual and were considered at a special meeting of the council in May 1943. In Plymouth, Paton Watson called for citizens to comment on the *Plan for*

Plymouth, stating that it was not up to planners to impose their views on cities. Similarly in Bristol, the draft plan presented to the city in 1944 was intended to promote the discussion of reconstruction amongst the public. The suggestions and opinions sent to the Council after the exhibition were used to refine the plan, with a further exhibition of the alternative plans and amendments received by the Council also put on display for public scrutiny.

This consultation process may not have quite been as sophisticated as modern planning practices, but it did offer citizens and interest groups the opportunity to comment upon and influence reconstruction plans. This input was taken seriously, with Bristol in particular carefully considering the objections and alternatives to the Broadmead plan. The eventual adoption of the Broadmead plan was because they could not see a viable alternative, particularly when traders had stated they wanted more space post-war. In addition to the direct consultations with citizens and interest groups, the plans of the three cities underwent the public enquiry process which allowed those affected by the plans to raise objections in a public arena. This process of public enquiry is also held up as an example of the 'top-down' nature of planning, as it has been thought that traders and property owners had to 'force' enquiries. However, the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act made public enquiries obligatory when plans required the acquisition of land by local authorities via compulsory purchase. As such, all three plans were subject to automatic public enquiries. As stated in Chapter Four, this is a subtle difference to the accepted narrative, with the local authorities having to open up their schemes to scrutiny and objections to ensure that the views of all interested parties were heard and evaluated. However, it moves the narrative from one of 'top down' planners to a

more inclusive and consultative process. Under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, those affected by a planning scheme or compulsory purchase order had the right to request a public enquiry, and it appears that it is this clause which has created the perception that all public enquiries had to be demanded by aggrieved property owners.

The public enquiries themselves have been subject to criticism, with accusations that they were controlled by the local authorities in order to suppress objections. This accusation has arisen from the grouping of objections by type, which reduced the number of objections listed for the enquiries. It has been assumed that this means that individuals did not get the chance to present their case, but the transcripts of the enquiries demonstrate that everyone had the right to be heard. Instead the grouping of the objections was due to the large numbers of similar objections, such as objections to property being included in compulsory purchase orders. It was practical for these objections to be presented as a whole by one Counsel, with individuals coming forward to make their case in support of the overall objection. The enquiry process was also overseen by the same set of Counsels and Inspectors, who were not directly involved with any of the cities in question, providing neutrality in the defence and hearing.

The consultation undertaken in each city and the requirement to hold a public enquiry demonstrates that planning was not simply a top-down process. Instead local people were involved with the process and there was a public arena for the scrutiny of the plans. Objections and suggestions for alterations were taken seriously, with some property being excluded from the Compulsory Purchase Orders

as a result of the public enquiries, and changes made to aspects of the plans after objections were made.

The suggestion that consultant planners and councillors were remote from local people is also debunked when the process of reconstruction is re-examined through the three cities. In all three cities there was continuity in the councils between the pre and post-war periods. The councils were made up of individuals who were directly involved with city life, with many either running their own businesses or coming from well-established trading families in each city. In Exeter there was a tradition of civic service, with several generations of some families, such as the Michelmores and Greenslades, serving on the council. Many councillors are long-serving, being consistently re-elected to their seats and serving from the interwar period through to the post-war period.[904] This gives continuity to the city governance, with the people overseeing post-war reconstruction often being those who oversaw the interwar development. Alderman Hennessey in Bristol is a good example of this continuity, serving on the housing committee both pre and post-war. The involvement of many of the councillors in city life also removes the 'remote' tag, as these were people who were intimately connected with the economic and social life of the cities. It is also notable the councillors are derived from all strata of society by the 1920s, with the humbler occupations represented as well as the professions.[905] As a result, it is hard to accuse the councillors of being remote from local life, as they were part of it. They were people who would have well understood the challenges facing the cities, the difficulties faced in tackling these problems pre-war, and the attitudes of local people towards city development. The overall impression is of a process which was far

[904] See Appendix C
[905] See Appendices A, B & C

more consultative than previously stated, undertaken by local people who were actively involved with city life. It also should be noted that where consultant planners were used, such as in Exeter and Plymouth, they did not have long-term input into the reconstruction process, only being retained for the drawing up of plans. Neither Abercrombie nor Sharp had input into the actual rebuilding process, with Sharp's contract terminated in 1946 and Abercrombie's in 1947. Instead their remit was to produce the plan and provide some initial advice and guidance during the public enquiry phases. 'The planners' therefore had little control over what was actually built, with councillors and council staff, such as those of the City Architect's or City Engineer's office, making those decisions.

The three cities therefore demonstrate that reconstruction was not the top-down process which has been supposed, but a far more nuanced process with multiple voices and inputs. The consultation with local people was more extensive than previously supposed, with the process of consultation and public enquiry comparable to modern planning consultations. The compulsion to hold a public enquiry under the 1944 act had been overlooked, shifting the narrative as this provided a public area for objections and grievances to be heard which local authorities were required to respect. The public enquiries of the three cities also demonstrate that this was a standardised process, featuring the same team of counsels and the same inspector, all of whom were outsiders to the three cities. By examining multiple cities in this study, the standardisation of the enquiry process becomes apparent; something which could easily have been overlooked in a single-city study.

Economic policy and constraints

One of the principal conclusions of this thesis has been to demonstrate that the compensation and land ownership clauses of the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 were major factors in the opposition to reconstruction plans. War damage compensation represented the only government funds available to blitzed traders and property owners for rebuilding their property. The format and functioning of these payments was misunderstood by traders and property owners from the outset, and it continues to be misunderstood today. As set out in Chapters Three and Four, war damage compensation was only intended to compensate owners for the loss of value to their property caused by war damage and to pay for repairs. It was never intended to function as an insurance policy, providing funds for a like for like rebuilding of the property. The Cost of Works payment was capped at the difference in value between a building in its damaged and undamaged state, as was the Value Payment. However, to reflect the changing buildings costs of the post-war era, Cost of Works payments were subject to an addition of 66.75%. There was also a clause that allowed for a larger payment to be made in some circumstances in order to reinstate sound, modern properties. This latter clause appears to have been interpreted by traders and property owners as an ‘old for new’ policy on all buildings and is probably the root of the confusion over payment types and amounts. However, under the 1944 Act, the Cost of Works payment could only be applied if a property remained on its original site, and no provision was made for those who were displaced by replanning and reconstruction schemes. The decision not to make Cost of Works payments ‘mobile’ left many blitzed traders in the position of only being able to claim the Value Payment, which they insisted was not enough to be

able to rebuild on a new site. The additions to the Value Payment and the eventual removal of the 1939 price ceiling were designed to close the gap between the two payments and make rebuilding more attractive for blitzed traders and property owners. When combined with the loss of freeholds, these amendments could not solve the problem.

The loss of freeholds under the 1944 Act was a particularly bitter blow to traders and property owners. There is evidence that the traders and main trade bodies in the three cities initially supported replanning and the pooling of land ownership in order to achieve those aims. It was recognised in the cities that replanning was necessary to tackle problems such as traffic congestion, and the most efficient way to achieve this was by bringing the land under single ownership and then redistributing the sites. It was also accepted that the most appropriate body to take ownership of the land was the local authority as it was considered a neutral body. The general support for bringing land into single ownership demonstrates that traders and property owners were willing to work within this framework for the benefit of the whole city. In Exeter and Plymouth, the reconstruction plans were met with general praise when they were released, with opinion only swinging against them once the financial position became clear. The combination of war damage, poor compensation and the loss of freeholds was too much for many independent traders who felt it was an attack on private enterprise. The loss of freeholds was particularly keenly felt, as for many smaller traders the freehold represented the greatest part of the value of their property. It was also a sign of status, demonstrating their hard work in building their business, and representing an asset to pass on to the next generation. The initial support for the idea of bringing all city centre property under

leasehold control was tied to the idea of the sites being sold back to the lessees at a later date. This idea was floated while the method for reconstruction was still being worked out by central government and it made the idea of replanning more palatable to blitzed traders as the loss of the site would only be temporary. The idea was quashed by one of the many government committees considering reconstruction prior to drafting of the 1944 act amid concerns that it would allow individuals to profit from war damage. The permanent loss of the freeholds started the shift of opinion amongst the traders away from replanning and towards the retention of the status quo.

The move to a leasehold tenure is the key to the idea that replanning and reconstruction were an attack on private enterprise and the loss of support for replanning. A leasehold property just did not have the same value to such traders and they could not see at as an investment in the same way as a freehold property. This might have been overcome if the cost of building on a leasehold basis had been met by the compensation payments, but the combination of having to fund a new building which would be held on a leasehold tenure added insult to injury for many of the independent traders. Their buildings had been destroyed or damaged through events beyond their control and now they were being deprived of both the compensation they felt they were entitled to and their property.

The examination of the public inquiries into the plans of the three cities highlights just how central the financial argument was to the opponents of the reconstruction plans. In all three cities the majority of objections lodged were based on the loss of freeholds, the financial provisions for reconstruction and the problems created by having to move sites, rather than objections to the actual structure of the plans

themselves. Only in Bristol were there specific objections to the shopping centre plan as a whole, as the Broadmead site had been prone to flooding in the nineteenth century and as a result there were concerns about the suitability of the site.

The concern of traders with regard to compensation and the cost of building are understandable and raise some questions about the Treasury's judgement of the situation.

If the Cost of Works payments had been made mobile, the evidence suggests that traders would have been more supportive of reconstruction plans. The decision not to make them mobile came from the Treasury amid concerns about the potential cost to government of reconstruction. The Treasury also viewed reconstruction very differently to blitzed traders in that they assumed that individuals would be prepared to invest war savings into a new building, regardless of the tenure of that building or the availability of compensation. The Treasury view was that the new building would be valuable regardless of its tenure owing to the potential long-term rental income and its value in a trading capacity. This view was indeed taken by the larger firms, multiple traders and finance companies, but leasehold was an unattractive prospect for the smaller traders.

The Treasury view on building therefore appears as a major error of judgement on their part, but it may also have been a more deliberate stance. The insistence that blitzed traders would see the value of investing their own savings into a new building was one of the reasons for not making the Cost of Works payment mobile, which also saved the government money in the long run. The Cost of Works payment, with its additions for price inflation, was of a higher value than the Value Payment, so restricting these payments offered a way of minimising the government

contribution. It may also have been viewed as a disincentive to the major replanning projects encouraged in blitzed cities at the beginning of the war, as trader support for the reconstruction plans was so clearly tied to the financial and property aspects of city centre rebuilding. Some cities, such as Portsmouth and Hull, did drastically curtail their reconstruction plans in the face of trader opposition based on the financial problems of reconstruction. This too had a monetary benefit to the government as it provided the loans for local authorities to acquire city centre land. The Treasury stance on personal investment in new buildings and the decision not to make Cost of Works payments may therefore have been a deliberate choice in order to curtail reconstruction plans and curtail the cost to the government.

The later constraints placed on reconstruction by central government and its economic policies are more straightforward in their motives. The constraints placed on the allocations of materials and investment were the biggest factors in delaying progress in city centre reconstruction. The initial controlling of materials and investment was entirely understandable against the background of economic and financial crises that characterised the immediate post-war years. The need to redirect and rebuild industry in order to move the economy back to a peacetime footing and to restart economic growth was immediate and urgent. Without ensuring a smooth transition to a peacetime economy there was the risk of the boom and bust cycle seen at the end of the First World War repeating itself. The Labour government had also taken up the baton of change from the wartime coalition government, which had promised reform in heath, education, social welfare and housing. The election had been fought on these grounds and progress had to be made in these areas in order to demonstrate to the electorate that they were not just hollow promises. There

was a very real housing crisis, which understandably needed building materials directing towards it and away from city centre rebuilding. The demands of industry, education and health were also prioritised above city centre reconstruction and this was again understandable against the background of the war and the resultant economic hardships. Industry needed to be rebuilt to allow exports to resume, bringing valuable funds into a British economy depleted by the war. The expansion health and education services were considered in many ways as part of the industrial rebuilding, as a healthy population would be more productive and expanded education would produce the workers and innovators of the future. It is noticeable that the traders of the three cities are fairly muted in their demands to be allowed to start rebuilding for the first two years of peace, as there is evidently some understanding that housing must take precedence.

From 1947 the clamour to rebuild became much louder, as it is felt that housing and industry are receiving too much preference and it is time to start rebuilding Britain's bombed cities which in turn will help return prosperity to those areas. The programmes for housing and industrial building gave the impression that materials and investment were freely available for building and were being restricted unnecessarily from commercial building via the licence system. This led to increasing unrest amongst blitzed traders over the delays in city centre reconstruction from 1947. What is interesting about this unrest is that it was almost entirely directed at the local authorities rather than central government, and appeared during Britain's worst post-war economic crisis in 1947. The economic problems of the nation were widely reported in both the local and national press, with the budget cuts of that year highlighting the difficulties the nation was facing. The

control of building by the licence system was intended to conserve materials which could then be directed to the export market, such as steel, and reduce the use of imported materials, such as wood. This situation was evidently not well understood by traders or the public and the restriction of materials were instead interpreted as political. The letters of the firms of Bruford's and Wheaton's in Exeter demonstrates that there was some understanding of both the licensing system and the need for export goods, as both firms wrote intelligent and well informed letters with regard to this to the local papers and the Board of Trade. The owners of Bruford's had questioned the City Council closely about the reasons for the delays in building and the functioning of the licensing system and had reported the answers they received to the *Express and Echo* in a letter. This letter was intended to inform other traders and citizens of the city about the problems facing the nation as a whole and how this was impacting on reconstruction. Plainly this was not well understood or they would not have felt the need to do this.

It seems strange on the surface that in this climate the blitzed traders of the South West should decide that the lack of progress in city centre reconstruction was due to the prevarication of local authorities rather than the economic crisis. However, turn this around and it becomes clear that there were traders who considered the reconstruction plans to be extravagant in terms of cost and therefore thought that central government would refuse to allow such work in times of austerity. The simplification of the plans or their abandonment was therefore thought to be the route to starting rebuilding, as it was the sheer cost which was preventing building licences being granted. They reasoned that if the proposed rebuilding was cheaper and therefore saved scarce resources, building licences were more likely to be

granted. This opinion is quite revealing in that it demonstrates that traders, and probably by extension the public as a whole, had very little understanding of what kind of building was being allowed and why. There is a constant refrain throughout the whole post-war period to 1954, when the building licence system was relaxed, that building should be deregulated as private enterprise could build better and cheaper. However, the building licence system regulated all types of building and the majority of commercial and industrial building was undertaken by private enterprise, not local authorities. There has been a persistent myth that building licences only regulated private building and that all the building was for the public sector through direct labour. The majority of house building in the first decade after the war was certainly by local authorities, but industrial and commercial building was undertaken by the private sector. Virtually all of the rebuilt city centres were constructed by private enterprise, with very few cities using direct labour to build commercial premises. Only Coventry used direct labour to any great extent, with even the 'local authority' shops cities such as Exeter built by private enterprise on behalf of the council.

The myth of private enterprise being more efficient and proficient in rebuilding can be debunked by Hull and Portsmouth. Both cities capitulated to the demands of private enterprise and virtually abandoned their reconstruction plans, allowing firms to rebuild on their previous sites with very little control or restriction over what was built. Neither city was able to rebuild its centre any faster than the other blitzed cities which retained their plans, in fact both cities experienced more delays, and the resultant buildings were essentially the same style as those found in all other blitzed cities. What makes them notable, particularly in Hull, is that they are poor in design even by the standards and architectural tastes of the period.

The attitude of the Treasury and the IPC toward city centre reconstruction from 1950 onwards is more difficult to understand. The massive rearmament programme prompted by the Korean War certainly accounts for the continued economic caution practised by the governments in the early 1950's. However, the continued neglect of the blitzed city programme by the IPC seems to be very deliberate and suggests a further agenda. The precise reasons for the continued reluctance of both the IPC and the Treasury to allocate any resources to blitzed cities are still very opaque. As discussed in Chapters Three to Five, there was a policy of continuing to restrict consumer goods in order to help control inflation and to direct resources towards export goods. This may still have been the reason for restricting investment and materials for blitzed cities in the early 1950's. Certainly there was an argument for continuing to restrict allocations of materials for city centre reconstruction in order to expand housing, as the pledge to extend the house building programme was a flagship Conservative policy. This does not explain why investment was so severely restricted in blitzed city rebuilding throughout the early 1950s. The reconstruction programme itself demonstrates that there were any number of private firms waiting to invest, with finance companies, development companies and multiple traders all prepared to invest in city centre rebuilding. With funds denied to small independent traders via the decisions on war damage compensation, these concerns were the only ones willing to build and yet the Treasury and the IPC were prepared to gamble on them being content to wait indefinitely for building consent. As yet no definitive evidence has been produced as to why blitzed cities were so continually denied the investment and materials to rebuild, so one can only speculate.

It does demonstrate that local authorities were not at fault for the long delays in starting rebuilding. The continued denial of investment allocations, and the eventual grudging allocation of very small amounts of investment finance, also demonstrates that it was not the local authorities' insistence at following a plan which held up reconstruction. The examples of Hull and Portsmouth, as already referred to, demonstrate that it was not planning that was the obstruction to reconstruction but the continued resistance of the IPC and the Treasury to allocate investment and materials.

It is clear in the cases of the three South Western cities that the lack of funding for reconstruction had the most influence on the city plans and eventual rebuilding. The problems of the war damage compensation left many local independent traders unwilling or unable to rebuild their premises. The result was that much of the reconstruction work was undertaken by insurance companies, developers and multiple traders. This necessity of relying on such large firms to rebuild is the root of the idea that reconstruction plans forced smaller traders out of blitzed city centres and began the dominance of the multiple trader in our High Streets. As noted in chapter five, this is not a particularly accurate picture, as the majority of pre-war traders did re-establish themselves in the post-war cities. Many chose to take rented premises rather than rebuild for themselves. In Exeter, which had larger areas of surviving buildings which retained their freeholds than in the centre of Plymouth or Bristol, some blitzed traders chose to buy property in these areas in order to remain freeholders. Much of the discontent around reconstruction was therefore the product of central government decisions about funding and compensation rather than a direct product of reconstruction planning.

Political ideology

The political discussions around reconstruction and reconstruction plans take a lesser role when set against the importance of economics and finance. The political affiliation of a local authority had little impact when finance and materials for rebuilding were denied. There are some political elements to other aspects of reconstruction as a whole, such as decisions around the provision of services and housing, but even this is slightly debatable. Bristol and Plymouth were both Labour-led in the years after 1945, but make no greater progress than Conservative – led Exeter in terms of housing provision (relative to their size as cities). The estate plans do not contain any greater provision of services and amenities nor do the house designs reflect a difference in ideology. The discussions within the Housing Committees do demonstrate where political differences can be found, with arguments over the provision of some housing features, such as storage sheds and overall floor space, and the speed of construction being set against concerns over cost. There is still some divide post-war between Labour councillors and their Conservative colleagues over what needed to be provided in working class housing, with some Conservative councillors still seeking to provide only the absolute minimum standards. Arguments over the cost of housing do feature frequently, although not always on party lines. Conservative councillors are more likely to question the cost of housing provision as they are highly aware that many of their supporters will object to high building costs and large amounts of local authority debt as ratepayers.

The concerns over cost in city centre reconstruction did not divide so neatly along party lines. There were dissenters at both ends of the political spectrum who opposed the reconstruction plans in the three cities, just as there were supporters of all colours. The reasons for dissent fit better with the traditional Labour vs. Conservative narrative of reconstruction, with Conservative councillors more likely to express concern at the potential cost of reconstruction while their Labour counterparts felt that issues such as housing should have priority over city centre reconstruction. Support for reconstruction plans, however, was spread evenly across the political spectrum as councillors of all political persuasions could see the benefits of a comprehensive reconstruction plan. It was recognised that the interwar nuisances such as traffic congestion had to be tackled and reconstruction offered an ideal opportunity to do so. As many of the councillors and aldermen who represented the three cities post-war had also been on their respective councils during the interwar period, many of them had experienced the difficulties and frustrations of trying to tackle such problems prior to the war. It is notable that contemporary newspaper reports record confirmed Conservatives, such as Exeter's Mayor Glave Saunders, stating that 'cheese paring' had no place in reconstruction, demonstrating that Conservative politics did not necessary result in reactionary planning.

Radical, comprehensive plans have been associated with Labour-led councils and the Labour government throughout the current reconstruction literature, while the less ambitious plans are associated Conservative-led councils. The three South Western cities clearly demonstrate that this association is incorrect, as all three city plans were drawn up under Conservative-led councils prior to the 1945 election.

Even Bristol's very slow planning process ran ahead of the change of government seen in 1945 and the Broadmead plan predates both the Labour-led council of 1945 and the Labour government. Plymouth is widely acknowledged as one of the most ambitious and radical reconstruction plans, yet it was published in 1943 under a Conservative council. The active support of the Conservative Viscount Waldorf Astor for both the *Plan for Plymouth* and blitzed city reconstruction has been noted by Essex and Brayshay in their work on Plymouth, yet the idea of radical plans being the product of Labour administrations still persists. Plymouth did shift from being staunchly Conservative to a Labour city with the 1945 election and it could be claimed that this change was responsible for the very complete execution of the *Plan for Plymouth.*

Plymouth did see a high level of trader dissent over the plan and it could be suggested that a Labour council was less interested in appeasing traders than a Conservative council, as following the plan was to benefit the ordinary citizen rather than the private business owner. However, Exeter City Council also pushed hard to rebuild according to the *Exeter Phoenix* plan and yet had remained a Conservative-led council throughout the post-war period. Exeter City Council had fought hard to retain the plan in as complete a form as possible, only making major changes when forced to do so by central government. The same determination was seen in Labour-led Plymouth, suggesting that it was a strong belief in the merits of the reconstruction plans rather than political ideology which ensured the plans stayed relatively intact. This seems to be very evident in Plymouth, a city which would sometimes jump the gun and start new phases of the plan ahead of official approval from the relevant ministry. The cities which diluted or abandoned their reconstruction plans, such as Southampton, Hull and Portsmouth, were often lacking a council

which was prepared to support the original reconstruction plan. Of the three, only Portsmouth had a Conservative-led council throughout both the war and the period 1945-1955. Hull was staunchly Labour throughout the post-war period, while Southampton's political character was rather more mixed with a fairly even split between the Labour and Conservative elements. The city did see a swing towards the Ratepayer's Association in the early 1950s, although this appears to be the combination of various right-centre groups under the banner of the Ratepayers. The mixed political backgrounds of these blitzed cities in addition to the political affiliations of the three South Western cities demonstrates that the success and scope of a reconstruction plan was not just dependent on the city's political make-up. A council which was prepared to support a radical reconstruction plan was needed and these came in all political colours.

The study of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth has opened up the understanding of the reconstruction process and demonstrated that some of the accepted narratives are inaccurate or overstated. The cities also demonstrate that the economic and financial elements of reconstruction played a far greater part in the changes and challenges to reconstruction plans. The process of planning is revealed as more collaborative than previously thought, with the three cities consulting extensively with citizens on the reconstruction they would like to see. The political ideology of both the Labour government and local councils is demonstrated to play less of a role in determining both reconstruction plans and the eventual fabric of the cities compared to the economic problems facing the nation post-war. Instead, the stance of the Treasury in the face of an unbalanced economy is revealed as the main factor in the

delays in rebuilding and the changes to city reconstruction plans. The resultant restrictions on both materials and investment were perpetuated by the incoming Conservative government in 1951, demonstrating that economic policy was born out of necessity rather than ideology. The three cities also demonstrate that the continuity between the pre- and post-war eras must be considered if we are to fully understand the nature of the reconstruction plans and the urban problems they were trying to solve.

Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth demonstrate that these factors are common across all three cities, suggesting that this experience is widespread. The different political natures of the councils further demonstrate this, as the colour of a council did little to influence the speed or execution of rebuilding. Instead all three cities faced the same challenges of restrictions on materials and investment, delaying reconstruction. The cities also demonstrate that the complexity of a plan did not affect the speed of rebuilding, as Plymouth and Bristol with their complete relaying of the street patterns built just as quickly as Exeter, which only made minor alterations to its pre-war streets. We can also see a unifying post-war architecture emerging, with similar motifs and designs present in all three cities. The consideration given to the designs demonstrates that this was a conscious choice, not at style born out of necessity. Again the continuity with pre-war building can be seen, demonstrating the importance of understanding the evolution of planning and architecture in understanding post-war reconstruction.

The three cities have also further unpacked the importance of the Treasury and IPC decisions in the emergence of the development company as a builder in city centres. The role of development and investment companies in reconstruction has only just

begun to be understood, and the researching of this area has particular relevance at the current time. The development companies which leased sites from local authorities in the post-war era are now the leaders in current city centre redevelopment, as seen in Exeter and Bristol over the last decade. The redevelopment of city centres under the control of single development companies has caused some disquiet, with concerns expressed about the privatisation of Britain's cities.[906] It is not understood that the land is still under the ownership of the local authority and that the developer is often the same company which has held the lease since the 1950s. The full exploration of the post-war development company and its role in reconstruction will link the eras of development in our cities and enrich our understanding of urban development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Additionally, the building of both city centres and housing post-war was undertaken by construction companies that went on to be the major developers of both commercial and domestic buildings, and infrastructure. Ravenseft worked with McAlpine, who undertook the actual building work for the company in the majority of cities they took leases in. McAlpine went on to become one of the foremost retail construction companies, and also worked on a series of infrastructure projects. House builders such as Laings provided many of the non-traditional houses used by blitzed cities, but also took major contracts such as the building of the Bullring in Birmingham. These companies have played an intrinsic part in the construction of Britain and their roots can be traced to post-war reconstruction. Therefore this thesis also suggests that a major study of their development and projects is well overdue, especially as their role is not well understood.

[906] *Guardian,* 'Will Privatisation of UK Cities Rip Out Their Hearts?', 21 February 2016; *Guardian,* 'Public Spaces in Britain's Cities Fall into Private Hands', 11 June 2012; *The Week,* 'Why the UK's Psuedo-Public Spaces are Under the Microscope', 11 October 2017.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bristol Council Members[907]

[907] Key to Council Member tables pre/post war: Served pre-war =1; served post-war =2; served both pre and post-war = 3

Name	Party affliation	Pre/post war	Ward	Occupation	Years elected/stood
Ackland, William Herbert	Liberal	1	St Pauls	Wholesale Stationer	1920, 1923, Stood 1926
Adams, Gilbert George	Labour	1	St George West		1933, 1936
Allan, George Alton Watson	Labour	3	Hillfields		1936, 1949, Stood 1938 (Clifton),
Allen, A J	Citizen	2	Southville		1947
Allen, Mrs E E	Labour	2	St Philip & Jacob North		1947
Andrews, Ernest Walter	Citizen	1	Clifton South		1931, 1935, 1937
Anstey, H		1			
Ayles, Walter Henry	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	Gentleman	1924
Badock, M A Miss	Citizen	2	Durdham		1945
Bagnall, W	Labour	2	St Philip & Jacob South		1949
Ball, Edward Jennings Dr	Citizen	1	St Michael	Medical Practitioner	1927, 1930
Barrow, T P	Citizen	2	Knowle, Windmill Hill		1945 (Knowle), Stood 1949 (Windmill Hill)
Barwood, A W	Labour	2	Southville		1945
Baston, Albert Edward	Labour	1	Somerset		1936
Baston, C S	Labour	1	Bedminster West		1929, 1931, 1935
Bateman, Luke	Labour	1	Stapleton		1929, 1932, 1935, Stood 1938.
Bennett, C G T	Citizen	1	St James		1932
Berrill, P C	Citizen	2	Redcliff		1950
Berriman, Frederick	Labour/Independent Labour	1	Bedminster West, Bedminster	Secretary	1926, 1930, 1933 (Ind), 1936
Bicker, James Frederick	Labour	3	St Pauls	Fruiterer	1926, 1929, 1932, 1935
Billing, Charles P		1			
Bishop, E S	Labour	2	Brislington		1950
Blackburn, A V	Citizen	2	Southville		1949
Blake, Leonard John	Labour	1	Brislington		1937
Bowden, A	Labour	2	St Philip & Jacob North		1949
Britton, George Bryant	Liberal	1	St George East	Boot Manufacturer	1920
Brown, Florence Mills	Labour	3	St Philip & Jacob South		1937, 1950
Brown, John Little	Liberal/Citizen	1	St Pauls	Friendly Society official	1921, 1924
Brown, K A L	Citizen	3	Horfield		1938, 1947
Bryant, Walter R	Liberal/Citizen	1	Horfield	Quarry Owner	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Buckle, E H	Citizen	2	Bedminster		1949
Budgett, Charles Theodore	Conservative/Citizen	1	Clifton North	Merchant	1920, 1923, 1926,
Bullock, G T	Labour	1	Hengrove		1938, 1947
Burgess, Alfred Whitfield Stone	Labour	1	Stapleton, St George East	Commercial Clerk	1922 (Stapleton), 1926, 1929 St George East, Stood 1925 Stapleton
Burgess, F J	Citizen	1	Eastville		1938, 1947
Burgess, Ruth	Labour	1	Stapleton		1933

Burke, G A	Labour	2	Somerset		1950
Byrt, E W	Citizen	2	District		1950
Byrt, William Henry	Coalition/Citizen	1	District	Master Cooper	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933
Cann, Percy W	Citizen	3	District		1935, 1938,
Castle, Adam Cottam	Conservative/Citizen	1	Redland	Solicitor	1920, 1923, 1926
Cave, E R L Mrs	Citizen	2	Durdham		1949
Chamberlain, A M Mrs	Citizen	2	Knowle		1949
Chamberlain, F G W	Citizen	2	Knowle		1945, 1947
Chivers, J N	Citizen	2	St Michael		1950
Clark, H J	Citizen	2	District		1945, 1947
Clibbens, John Jabez	Citizen	1	Redcliff	Schoolmaster (r)	1924, 1927
Clifford, Sidney	Citizen	2	Durdham		1950
Clothier, Frederick Francis	Labour	1	Easton	District Delegate, National Painters Society	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929
Cole, J	Labour	2	Hillfields		1938
Cook, Frederick John Mervyn	Citizen	3	Westbury on Trym		1930, 1933, 1936, 1945, 1949
Cook, Henry Leonard	Labour	3	Bedminster		1937, 1950
Cook, W Gow Dr	Labour	1	Bedminster West	Physician & Surgeon	1924, Stood 1923 (Southville)
Cotterell, H F		1			
Cottle, James	Coalition	1	Bedminster West	Meat purveyor	1921
Cottrell, William Frederick	Citizen	3	District		1936, 1945
Cox, A J	Citizen	2	Redcliff		1947
Cox, Arthur William	Labour	1	Easton	Secretary	1926, 1930, 1933, 1936
Cox, Sidney	Conservative	1	Central West	Wholesale Grocer and provisions merchant	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929
Coxwell, A J	Labour	2	Brislington		1945
Cozens, Ebenezer Thomas	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North	Railway Rolling Stock Inspector	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1932, 1935
Cozens, W G	Labour	2	Easton		1947
Cridland, Henry James	Conservative/Citizen	1	St James	Wholesale Boot Manufacturer	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929
Crook, H	Citizen	1	Bishopston		1938
Culverwell, Cyril Tom	Citizen	1	Westbury on Trym	Gentleman	1924, 1927
Cunningham, Reginald Robert	Labour	3	St Augustines		1937, 1950
Cunningham, Robert George	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	Boot & Shoemaker	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Curle, John	Labour	1	Bedminster East	Builder	1923, 1926
Curtis, William Henry	Coalition/Citizen	1	Horfield	Baker & confectioner	1921, 1924, 1927
Dancey, Walter	Labour	3	Southville, Windmill Hill		1929 (Southville), 1945 (Windmill Hill), 1947

Daniel, George	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	Dealer	1926, 1929
Dare, J Mrs	Labour	2	Hillfields		1950
Davey, E F	Labour	3	Somerset		1938, 1945
Davies, George E Sir		1			
Davies, R C	Citizen	1	Horfield		1932, 1935
Davies, Walter Sealey	Citizen	3	Southville		1936, 1950, Stood 1945
Despres, Alfred Victor	Labour	1	St Augustines	Manufacturer's Agent	1928, Stood 1923, 1924, 1938 (both Redcliff), 1925, 1931, 1937 (St Augustine)
Deverell, M L Mrs	Labour	2	Somerset		1945, 1949
Dixon, Thomas Benjamin	Citizen	1	Bedminster East	Physician & Surgeon	1924
Dobson, D P Mrs	Citizen	3	Stapleton		1938,
Donovan, J	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North		1938
Dowling, Alfred	Liberal	1	Southville	Builder	1922, JP
Downes-Shaw, Archibald Havergal	Citizen	1	Redcliff		1931, 1934, 1937
Duggan, A L	Citizen	3	Bedminster		1938, 1947
Dunscombe, Ernest John	Conservative	1	St Michael	Optician	1920, 1923
Dunster, Ernest	Labour	1	Easton	Postman	1925, 1928, 1934, Stood 1924, 1931, 1932 (District), 1933 (Southville)
Dyer, E M		1			
Eberle, J Fuller		1			
Evans, Henley S	Citizen	1	Clifton North, Durdham		1929, 1935 (Clifton North), 1938 (Durdham)
Eyles, William Henry	Liberal/Citizen	1	Horfield	Fruit Merchant	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929
Farmer, Albert George	Citizen	1	Bedminster East, Southville		1931 (Bedminster East), 1934, 1937 (Southville)
Ford, G P C	Citizen	2	St James		1945, 1947
Foweraker, E A Miss	Labour	2	Brislington		1945, 1947
Francombe, James Thomas	Coalition	1	Redcliff		1921,
Galsworthy, F S	Labour	2	Windmill Hill		1950
Gane, Philip Endras	Liberal/Citizen	1	St James	House Furnisher	1922, 1925,1928,
Gardner, C E L		1			
Gay, R J B	Citizen	2	Knowle		1950
Giles, Mathias	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North	Trade Union Official	1925, 1928, 1931, Stood 1924 (Stapleton)
Gill, Charles Richard	Labour	3	Bedminster West, Windmill Hill	Miners Agent	1922, 1925, 1928, 1933, 1936 Stood 1931
Gleeson, Kate Annie	Labour	3	Hillfields, St George West		1937 (Hillfields), 1950 (St George West)
Goodenough Taylor, L	Citizen	1	Clifton South, Clifton		1929, 1935 (Clifton South), 1938 (Clifton)
Goodson, J J	Citizen	2	Durdham		1947
Griffiths, H R	Citizen	1	Westbury on Trym		1929, 1932, 1935, 1938
Gunning, M L Mrs	Citizen	2	Westbury on Trym		1945, 1947
Habgood, F E C	Labour	1	St Augustines		1930
Hall, Richard Ashley	Citizen	1	Central East		1931, 1934, Stood 1937 (Eastville)

Hall-Houghton, Alicia Maud Miss	Citizen	1	Knowle		1936
Hancock, Edward John	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	'Collector-Salesman'	1920, 1923
Harding, E G	Labour	3	Redcliff		1929, 1945, Stood 1934
Harding, F	Citizen	2	Westbury on Trym		1945, 1950
Harris, F M Mrs	Labour	2	Bedminster		1945
Harrison, R N	Citizen	1	St James		1935, 1938
Hartnell, C M	Citizen	2	St James		1950
Hasell, W T P	Citizen	2	Bishopston		1945, 1947
Haskins, Henry	Liberal/Citizen	1	District	Cycle & Motor Cycle Factor	1922, 1925
Hawkins, Miss D	Labour	2	St Paul		1947
Hayes, H C	Citizen	2	St Michael		1945, 1947
Hazard, F S	Citizen	2	Stapleton		1950
Heard, Albert George	Citizen	1	Westbury on Trym		1931, 1934, 1937
Hebblethwaite, C	Citizen	2	St Augustine		1949
Hennessey, Henry Walter	Labour	3	St George West	Warehouseman	1921, 1924, 1927, 1934,
Hennessy, Mary Ann	Labour	1	St George West		1937
Hill, Albert Edward	Conservative/Citizen	1	St Michael	Valuer & Assessor	1922, 1925, 1928
Hill, H D Mrs	Citizen	2	Bishopston		1945
Hodder, Clemant Hartley	Conservative/Citizen	1	Clifton North	Ship Owner/Broker	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937
Holloway, E	Labour	2	St George East		1947
Horlick, E F Major	Citizen	2	Stapleton		1949
Houghton, Robert	Conservative/Citizen	1	St Augustines	Cutler & Ironmonger	1922, 1925
Humphries, Samuel Colston	Citizen	1	Central West, Stapleton		1930, 1933, 1936
Humphries, Sidney Richard White Sir	Conservative	1	Westbury On Trym	Miller & Corn Merchant	1922, 1925, 1928
Hutchings, Charles G	Citizen	1	Central West		1935, 1945?
Insall, A H		1	Redland		1924
Inskip, John Hampdon	Coalition/Citizen	1	Clifton North	Solicitor	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930
James, Gilbert Sidney	Citizen	3	Redcliff		1930, 1933, 1936, Stood 1945
Jeffries, Thomas	Labour	1	Easton		1932, 1935, 1938
Jenkins, A H	Citizen	2	Clifton		1950
Johnson, G H	Labour	1	St Pauls		1938
Jones, A	Labour	2	Avon		1945
Jones, Dennis Michael	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South		1933, 1936
Jones, John Edward	Coalition/Citizen	1	St James	Builder & contractor	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930
Jones, Vyvyan Rev	Labour	2	Easton		1949
Jones, W H	Labour	2	St George East		1949
Keel, Charlotte Minnie	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North		1934, 1937
Keen, Arthur Percival	Liberal/Citizen	1	Somerset	Baker & Confectioner	1920, 1923, 1926, Stood 1929
Kennedy, James	Coalition	1	Westbury on Trym	Quarry Owner (r)	1921

Knight, John Henry	Labour	3	Horfield		1937, 1950
Knight, S	Labour	2	Avon		1949
Latimer, William Little Thomas	Liberal/Citizen	1	Westbury on Trym	Insurance Broker	1920, 1926
Leaman, H J	Citizen	2	District		1949
Lee, Henry Robert	Citizen	1	Somerset		1930, 1933 (Somerset),1937 (Knowle) Stood 1936 (Brislington)
Lewtas, David	Citizen	1	Horfield, Bishopston		1930, 1933, 1936
Light, S C	Labour	1	Somerset		1929
Livermore, Horace William Francis	Coalition/Citizen	1	St Augustine	Music Hall Proprietor (r)	1921, 1924, 1927
Lloyd, F A	Citizen	2	Stapleton		1947
Loveless, E F Miss	Labour	2	St George East		1950
Luke, Chrispen Francis E	Citizen	1	St Michaels	Civil Servant (r)	1926, 1929, 1935, 1938
Lyne, Robert Francis	Citizen	3	Central East, St Augustine	Barrister	1924, 1927, 1930, 1933 (Central East), 1936 (St Augustine),
Maddison, A	Labour	2	Windmill Hill		1950
Maggs, Herbert John	Liberal/Citizen	1	St George East	Wholesale Grocer & Provision Merchant	1923, Stood 1921, 1926
Makin, Henry William	Labour	1	Avon		1937
Manners, Joseph	Labour	1	St Augustines	Trade Union Secretary	1926, 1929, 1932, 1935
Mansfield, Reginald Clifford	Labour	3	St Pauls		1937, 1950
Marshall-Hall, Frank	Citizen	1	Redland	Manager	1927, 1930, 1936
Martin, George Alfred	Citizen	1	St James		1931, 1931, 1937
Martin, Thomas Henry	Labour	3	Brislington		1936, 1949
McArthur, Allan	Conservative	1	Central West	Iron Merchant	1922
McGougan, M	Citizen	1	St Augustines		1931
Meade-King, Lilian Miss	Citizen	1	Central West	'Spinster'	1928, 1931, 1934
Merrick, Walter Henry	Labour	1	St George East	Machine Operator (cocoa & chocolate ind.)	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Metcalfe, Frederick Evelyn	Conservative	1	Central East	Solicitor	1920, 1923, 1926
Milton, John James	Labour	1	St George West	Local Mananger, Insurance Society	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929
Monk, I D Mrs	Labour	2	Stapleton		1945, Stood 1949
Moon, Albert Francis	Liberal/Citizen	1	St Philip & Jacob South, District		1922 (St Philip), 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937 (District),
Moore, Frank		1			
Moss, F H	Citizen	2	Clifton		1945, 1947
Mullis, Frederick George	Conservative/Citizen	1	Clifton South	Coal Merchant	1922, 1925, 1928
Munslow, W J	Labour	2	Windmill Hill		1949
Nash, P J T	Labour	2	St Pauls		1949

Neale, Edward Isaac	Conservative/Citizen	1	Redcliff	Builder & Contractor (r)	1922, 1925
Newth, Herbert George	Liberal/Citizen	1	Stapleton	Wholesale Cabinet Maker	1920, 1923, 1926
Nott, William H	Labour	1	St Augustines		1933
Nunn, Ada Ann	Labour	3	Eastville		1937, 1950
Nutt, Amelia Elizabeth Miss	Labour	3	Hengrove		1936, 1945, 1949
Osmond, Albion Victor	Coalition	1	Stapleton	Autioneer	1921
Owen, James	Labour	1	St Pauls	Trade Union Official	1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Page, Lionel Dr	Coalition/Citizen	1	Central East	Physician and surgeon	1921, 1925, 1928, Stood 1924 (St Philip S)
Page-Wood, Thomas	Coalition/Citizen	1	Central West	Gunsmith	1921, 1924, 1927
Palmer, G	Citizen	2	Durdham		1949
Palmer, W S	Citizen	2	St James		1945, 1949
Parish, Frederick Arthur	Labour	3	Redcliff, St Philip & Jacob South	Secretary (Approved Society)	1928, 1932, 1935, 1938 (St Philip), Stood 1925, 1926, 1927, 1931, On committees post-war
Parker, E H	Labour	1	St Pauls		1931
Parker, Edwin Henry	Labour	1	St Pauls	Trade Union Official	1922, 1925, 1928, 1934
Parker, J V		1	St Michael		1924
Parsons, E		1			
Perkins, George Leydon	Labour	1	Bedminster East	Railway Clerk	1920
Perrett, Charles Rose	Coalition/Citizen	1	Somerset	Insurance Agent	1921, 1924, 1927
Pheysey, Lillian Maude Mrs	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North	'Married woman'	1921, 1924, 1927
Phippen, Frank	Labour	1	Avon		1936
Pitt, William Alfred	Citizen	1	Clifton		1936
Plaisted, Edgar Joseph	Labour	1	Bedminster East, Windmill Hill		1934 (Bedminster East), 1937 (Windmill Hill)
Plum, G Talbot	Citizen	1	Central East, St Augustine		1929, 1935 (Central East), 1938 (St Augustine)
Poole, Leslie Joseph	Labour	3	Horfield		1936, 1945, 1949
Pope, S C	Labour	1	Somerset		1932, Stood 1935
Price, Daniel	Labour	3	Somerset		1937, 1945
Priday, H R	Labour	2	St Augustines		1945, Stood 1949
Priscott, John	Liberal/Citizen	1	District	Commercial Traveller (r)	1923, 1926, 1929
Proctor, P K	Citizen	2	St Michael		1945, 1949
Pugh, E T	Labour	1	Bedminster West		1934
Pullen, J E	Labour	2	Southville		1945, 1947
Rankin, Howard	Liberal	1	St Philip & Jacob North	Printer	1922, Stood 1925
Raymond, Percy	Labour	3	Hengrove		1937, 1950
Reade, R St J	Labour	2	Hillfields		1947
Richards, Ernest Brookhouse	Conservative/Citizen	1	Redcliff	Ironfounder	1920, 1923, 1926, Stood 1929
Righton, George Ivor	Citizen	1	Redland		1931, 1935, 1937
Roberts, E	Citizen	2	Bishopston		1950
Robinson, Edward	Coalition	1	Southville		1921,

Robinson, Vivian J	Citizen	1	Redcliff		1932, 1935, 1938
Robinson-White, Edith Sarah Mrs	Citizen	1	Stapleton	Widow	1924, 1927, 1930, Stood 1933,
Rogers, H E	Labour	1	St George East		1935, 1938
Ross, Vincent James	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob North		1933, 1936
Rowat, Harold Frederick	Labour	3	Eastville		1936, 1945, 1949
Salmond, P W	Citizen	2	St Michael		1945
Salt, W E Mrs	Labour	1	Avon		1938
Sampson, Frank Ernest	Citizen	1	Southville	Engineer	1924, 1927, 1930, 1933
Savory, Ernest Wyman	Conservative	1	St Augustines	Publisher	1920, 1923
Scull, W	Labour	1	St George West		1935, 1938
Senington		1			
Shallard, George	Labour	1	St George East	Printer & Stationer	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Sheppard, Frank	Labour	1			
Shirley, Samuel Arthur	Conservative	1	Clifton South	Provisions Merchant	1920, 1923
Smith, Arthur Lionel Henry	Citizen	1	Stapleton	Dairyman	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937
Smith, C H	Labour	2	Easton		1950
Smith, Emily Harriet Miss	Coalition/Citizen	1	Clifton South		1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933
Smith, Robert	Conservative/Citizen	1	Easton	Baker & Confectioner	1922, 1926, Stood 1925
Sprackling, Frederick Edward	Conservative/Citizen	1	Southville	Boot Specialist	1920, 1923, 1926, Stood 1929, 1930 (Bedminster West)
Stallard, Herbert	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	Railwayman	1927
Stamp, F	Labour	3	St Augustine, Southville		1934 (St Augustine), 1945 (Southville)
Steadman, Percy	Liberal	1	District	Wholesale Boot Manufacturer	1920
Stephens, R C	Conservative	1	Central	Army Officer (Yeomanry), then railway carrier	
Stevenson, L K	Citizen	2	Redcliff		1949
Stockman, M Rev	Labour	2	St George West		1949
Strimer, Helen	Labour	2	Avon		1945, 1947,
Stringer, K E	Citizen	2	Bishopston		1949
Stroud, John Stroud Gwyer William	Coalition	1	Redland		1921,
Tambling, Mrs D F E	Labour	2	St George West		1947
Taylor, E	Citizen	2	St Augustine		1947
Thomas, A W Major	Labour	2	Redcliff		1945
Thomas, Arthur Ernest	Conservative	1	Central East	Shot and lead sheet manufacturer	1922
Thomas, T B	Labour	2	Somerset		1947
Thompson, George	Labour	1	St Philip & Jacob South	Draper	1921
Thornton Wills, T	Citizen	1	Bedminsters West, Somerset, Knowle		1931, 1935 (Somerset), 1938 (Knowle), Stood 1934 (Bedminster West)

Toms, Arthur Cecil Kelway	Citizen	1	St Michael		1933, 1936
Tuckett, R C	Citizen	1	Easton		1931
Turner, H G	Labour	2	Stapleton		1945
Twiggs, H J		1			
Underdown, Thomas Henry Johnson	Liberal/Citizen	1	Bedminster West, Southville	Schoolmaster (r)	1920, 1923, 1926 (Bedminster West), 1932, 1935, 1938 (Southville)
Veale, Alfred Joseph	Conservative/Citizen	1	Redland	Insurance & Financial Agent	1922, 1925, 1928
Venning, A K Mrs	Labour	2	Avon		1945, 1946, 1950
Vevers, Ethel Mary	Citizen	1	Bishopston		1937
Walker, Horace	Coalition/Citizen	1	Easton	Chocolate manufacturer	1921, 1924
Walker, T	Citizen	2	Redland		1950
Wall, Henry Arthur	Citizen	1	St James		1933, 1936
Waring, W J	Labour	2	St Philip & Jacob North		1950
Weaver, Alfred Henry	Labour	1	Bedminster East	Shop Manager	1922
Webber, Frederick Arthur	Citizen	1	St Michael		1931, 1934, 1937
Wells, E A	Citizen	1	Redland		1929, 1935
Wheeler, A	Citizen	1	Brislington		1938
White, Frank Ernest	Labour	1	Bedminster East	Trade Union Official	1921, 1925, 1928, Stood 1924, 1931
White, Henry Albert	Citizen	1	Southville	Leather Goods Manufacturer	1925, 1928, 1931, Stood 1924 (Bedminster West)
Wilkins, W F	Labour	2	Windmill Hill		1945, 1949
Wilkins, William Albert	Labour	3	St George East		1937
Willcox, H W M	Labour	2	Somerset		1950
Williams, F C	Labour	1	Bedminster East, Windmill Hill		1929, 1932 (Bedminster East), 1938 (Windmill Hill)
Williams, G M Miss	Citizen	1	Redland		1938, 1947
Winchester, William Albert	Labour	1	St George West	Photographer	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931
Wise, Thomas James	Liberal/Citizen	1	Somerset	'Purveyor'	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Witty, Featherstone	Citizen?	1	Central West	Banker	1925
Woodcock, Herbert Charles	Coalition	1	St Michael	Stockbrocker	1921
Wright, A J M	Citizen	2	Clifton		1945, 1949
Wright, Wiliam Thomas	Citizen	1	Clifton North, Durdham		1933, 1936
Wroe, Frederick	Labour	1	Bedminster East	Trade Union Secretary	1927, 1930, Stood 1923, 1924, 1925 (Somerset), 1926,
Yeoman, E M	Citizen	2	Redland		1945, 1949

Appendix B: Exeter Council Members

Name	Party affliation	Pre or post war	Ward	Profession	Years elected/stood
Ackroyd, N	Independent	1	St Johns		1929, 1932
Ackroyde, James William	Conservative	1	St Pauls, St Petrocks	Draper	1927 (St Pauls), 1935?, 1938 (St Petrocks)
Agar, F		1			
Allen, Rachel Mrs	Labour	1	St Thomas		1927
Andrews, T.A		1			
Anstey, Alfred		1		Solicitor?	
Aplin, William Henry	Liberal	1	St Pauls	Accountant	1931, 1934? Stood 1937
Baker, R V	Ratepayer	2	Whipton		1945, 1949
Baker, William Tavener	Liberal/Independent	1	Exwick	News agent & stationer	1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Balkwill, Richard Eames	Liberal	1	Exwick	Compositor	1920, 1921, 1923, 1926
Barnes, T G	Labour	2	Cowick		1945, Stood 1949
Beer, William Wallace	Conservative	1	St Petrocks	Accountant & auditor	1930, 1933, 1936?
Bishop, William Henry Chatterly	Conservative (leader)	3	St Johns	Businessman	1935, Stood 1938 (St Johns), 1945 (St Petrocks)
Blanchford, Frederick	Conservative	1	St Leonards	Company director (Willeys)	1928
Bolt, William Henry	Independent	1	St Johns	Baker	1922, 1925, 1928
Boon, Albert W	Conservative	1	St Sidwells	Butcher	1926
Bovey, Alfred James	Labour	2	Wonford	Railwayman	1945
Bradbeer, Harry	Liberal	3	St Pauls	Builder (retired war/post war)	1920, Stood 1921 (Polsloe), 1923 (St Pauls)
Bradley, Henry Edgar	Liberal/Independent	1	St Thomas	Sub-Post Master	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934? 1937
Brock, A.F		1			
Brock, Arthur Ernest	Liberal	1	Polsloe	Furnisher	1920,1921, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Brock, William	Liberal	2	St Matthews	Furnisher - Brock & Co	1920, 1921, 1923
Brooks, Philip Francis	Labour	1	Wonford	Railway shunter	1933, 1936
Browne, Florance Grace	Unionist/Conservative	1	St Leonards	Widow	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936?
Browning, Alfred William Campion	Labour	1	St Johns	Fish & Fruit Merchant	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930,1933, 1936
Butcher, W.H	Labour	2	Polsloe		Stood 1949
Button, S		1			
Campion, H		1			
Challice, Richard Marks	Liberal	1			
Chard, Sidney	Unionist/Independent/Conservative	1	Heavitree	Butcher	1926, 1929, Stood 1921 (Wonford)

Chick, Frank	Liberal	1	Cowick	Motor & cycle factor	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933
Chilcott, Samuel Edward	Labour	1	Trinity	Trade Union Official	1926, 1929, 1932, Stood 1935
Chinn, William George	Labour	1	Exwick	Railway Inspector	Stood 1920,1921
Clapp, C.R.M		1			
Cole, C		1			
Collard, James	Conservative	1	Polsloe	Monumental sculptor	1930, 1933, 1936
Collings, R.A.F	Labour	2	St Marks		1946
Collinson, Frederick	Conservative	1	Wonford	'Retired'	1930
Coombes, John	Liberal	2	Cowick		1946
Cottey, Frederick Peter	Liberal (leader)	3	St Sidwells	Solicitor	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934?, 1937
Creasy, Ronald Hay	Conservative	2		Army Liet.Col (retired)	
Crosse, Sidney Ernest	Conservative	1	Heavitree	Solicitor	1928, 1931, 1934
Davey, F	Labour	2	Trinity		1945, Stood 1949
Daw, George Gilbert	Conservative	1	St Davids	Baker (retired)	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934?, 1937
Daw, Walter George	Conservative	2	St Davids	Gas engineer	1945, 1949
Docker, W A	Ratepayer	2	Whipton		1946
Dowell, E S	Conservative	2	Trinity		1949
Down, W H	Ratepayer	2	St James		1945, Stood 1949
Fraser, Donald Beaton	Labour	1	Cowick	Priest (Free Church)	Stood 1920, 1921
Gardner, Edward John	Labour	1	St Pauls	Railway Signalman	Stood 1920, 1921, 1926 (Rougemont)
Garnsworthy, T.W		1			
Gater, Harry	Conservative	1	St Davids	Schoolmaster (retired)	1930, 1933, 1936?
Gater, J G	Conservative	2	St Marks		1949
Gatey, Kenneth		1	St Pauls		1933, 1936?
Gayton, F.R	Labour	1	Exwick		1921
Gayton, Percy Rufus	Liberal	1	Exwick	Railwayman	
Gibbs, William Stanley	Labour	1	Trinity	Clerk	1930, 1933
Gillingham, George	Ratepayers/Liberal	1	Polsloe	Grocer (retired)	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Gillingham, H		1			
Glanfield, T		1			
Goddard, K J Mrs	Conservative	2	St Leonards		1945
Greenslade, Gilbert John	Independent	3	Polsloe	Coach Co. Owner	1935?, 1938, Stood 1936
Greenslade, W J	Liberal/National Liberal	2	St Matthews	Coach Co.Owner	1945, 1949
Grose, L A	Labour	3	St Johns		1937, Stood 1936 (St Johns), 1946 (Emmanuel)
Guest, Arthur George	Liberal	1	Cowick	Coal merchant (Varwell, Guest & Co)	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Hallett, Leonard James	Conservative	1	Wonford	Solicitor	1927

Hamlin, W H	Conservative?	1	Heavitree	Wholesale Grocer (Peters & Hamlin)	
Hancock, Frederick James	Labour	3	Heavitree	Railway Guard	1922, 1925, 1932, Stood 1946
Harding Charles Henry	Liberal	1	St Thomas	Carpenter	1922, Stood 1937 , 1938 (Wonford)
Heale, William	Conservative	1	St James	Secretary of Friendly Society	1921, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Hexter, Percival Facey	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Auctioneer	1927, 1930, 1933, 1936?
Heywood, George Charles	Liberal	1	Cowick	Grocer	1928, 1931, 1934?,1937
Hickmott, Arthur	Labour	1	Trinity	Outfitter (retired)	1928,
Hill, Charles James Stone	Liberal	1	St Matthews	Baker & Confectioner	1921, 1924, 1927,1930, 1933, 1936?
Hill, Charles William Holcombe	Liberal	3	St Matthews	Baker (director of S.W firm)	1926, 1929, 1932, 1935?, 1938
Hill, H		1			
Hipwell, A Dr	Conservative	1	Heavitree	Doctor/public health inspector	1923
Hodge, R M A Mrs	Labour	2	Emmanuel		1945, Stood 1949
Holme, E M	Conservative	1	Heavitree		1936
Hooper, H		1			
Hooper, Thomas	Conservative	1	Wonford	Builder	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Hoskins, Charles	Conservative	1	Belmont		1920, 1921
Hoult, Frederick	Conservative	1	Wonford	Butcher (retired)	1920, 1923, 1926
Howard, Thomas	Liberal/Independent	3	St Thomas	Hotelier (Seven Stars)	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1932, 1935?, 1938, 1946
Hunt, W.E		1			
Hunt, Walter Tom	Ratepayers	1	Belmont	Baker & Confectioner	1922, 1925, 1931
Hunt, William Tom	Liberal/Independent	1	Belmont, Emmanuel	Baker & Confectioner	1922,1928, 1931, 1934?, 1937 (Belmont), 1946 (Emmanuel)
Hutton, Charles	Ratepayers	1	Polsloe	GPO inspector	1921
Inch, P W	Ratepayer	2	Heavitree		1946
Kelland, Phillip	Liberal	1	St Matthews	Gentleman	
Kelly, C.B	Conservative	1	St Petrocks		1922
Knapman, Cecil Henry	Unionist	1	Rougemont	Miller & grain merchant	1921
Lake, J. H Ellett		?			
Lake, John	Conservative	3	Trinity	Engineer	1931, 1934, 1937, 1946
Lake, Norman J	Liberal	1			
Langdon, E J	Socialist	1	Exwick		1938, Stood 1936, 1937
Langmaid, Alfred		1	St Pauls		1932, 1935?, 1938
Lea, E.C		1			
Linscott, Walter Steel	Liberal	1	St Johns	Pawnbroker	1920, 1923,

					1926
Lisle, William Richard	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Jeweller	
Lucas, John Archibald		1		Architect, surveyor & land agent	
Mansfield, Ernest James	Liberal	1	St Pauls	Antique furnisher and art dealer	1921, 1924
Martin, C	Liberal	1	Cowick		1936
Mathew, John Walter Wright	Ratepayers	1	Heavitree		1921
Maton, W.C		1			
McGahey, Michael John	Liberal	1	St Sidwells	Solicitor	1922,
McGahey, R.J	Liberal	2	St Matthews		1946, Stood 1945
Michelmore, William Goodwin		2		Solicitor	
Miller, B S	Conservative	1	Heavitree		1937
Miller, Henry Charles	Independent	1	St Pauls	Licenced Victualler	1930
Milton, Elias	Independent	1	St Pauls	Marine Store proprietor (retired)	1922, 1925, 1928
Mitchell, William	Ratepayers/Conservative	1	St Sidwells	Builder	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936?
Moist		1			
Morgan, Horace G	Conservative	1	St Davids		1920, 1921
Mortimore, H	Labour	1	St Matthews		1934?, 1937
Munro, Hector John	Liberal	1	Trinity	Dairyman	
Nethercott, J.R		1			
Newcombe, F.D	Conservative	3	Trinity, Polsloe		1945, 1949 (Polsloe)Stood 1933 (Trinity)
Nichols, M	Liberal				
Nicholson, J C	Conservative	2	St Loyes		1949
Norman, Walter Thomas	Conservative	1	St Sidwells	Hotelier (Bude hotel)	1920, 1921
Northcott, W R	Ratepayer	2	Heavitree		1945, Stood 1949
Norton, J C	Conservative	2	St James		1949
Oliver, J P		1	St Leonards		1932
Orchard, John Bailey Rowe	Conservative	1	Heavitree	Hotelier	1924, 1927,
Orchard, John Geoffrey Rowe	Conservative	3	Heavitree	Hotelier, Accountant	1929 (by-election), 1930, Stood 1933, 1945
Otten, Walter John (James?)	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Builders Merchant	1931, 1934?, 1937
Page, S J	Labour	2	Exwick		1946, Stood 1945
Panter, Samuel Charles	Ratepayer/Conservative	1	St James	Draper	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930
Parish, W G	Conservative	2	Emmanual		1949
Passmore, A J	Socialist	1	St Johns		1938
Passmore, John E	Conservative	1	St Davids	Schoolmaster (retired	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Pearse, J		1			
Pedlar, E	Socialist/Labour	3	Wonford		1935, 1938, 1946
Pedrick, H C	Labour	2	St Thomas		1945

Phillips, P R	Conservative	2	St Thomas		1949
Picken, H	Conservative	2	Heavitree		1949
Pitts, Arthur Northcote	Conservative	1	St Petrocks	Wine Merchant	1925
Pitts, W.J	Liberal	1	Trinity		1920, 1923
Plummer, E.S		1			
Pocknell, G.R		1			
Pollard, Herbert Frederick	Conservative	3	Rougemont, St Leonards	Printer	1925, 1928 (Rougemont), 1935?, 1938, 1946(St Leonards)
Powley, A S	Conservative	2	Polsloe		1946
Pring, Tom C	Conservative	1			
Priston, Samuel John	Conservative	1	Cowick	Merchant	1920, 1921
Pyle, L A	Labour	2	St Marks		1945
Reed, A.C MRS	Conservative	1	Rougemont, St James		1931 (St James), 1932 (Rougemont)
Reed, Arthur Conrad Sir	Unionist (Conservative?)	3	St James	Paper manufacturer	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1937
Reed, Emilie Ward Mrs	Conservative	1	Rougemont		1926, 1929, 1935?, 1938
Rew, C	Labour	2	Exwick		1945, 1949
Rew, R J	Conservative	1	Polsloe		1937
Richardson, George Alfred	Independent Conservative	1	Trinity	Licenced Victualler (Fountain Inn)	1922, 1925
Roberts, Arthur H	Liberal	2	St Petrocks	Businessman	1945
Robinson, R R	Conservative	2	St James		1946
Rooks, P F	Labour	1	Wonford		1933
Roper, Arthur Charles		1			
Ross, Charles Josiah		1		Outfitter	
Rowe, Harold C	Conservative	1	St James	Rowes?	1933, 1936? Stood 1932
Rowe, J.C	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Rowe furnishers	1923,
Rowe, Thomas Bradley	Liberal	1	St Pauls	Merchant	
Rowsell, P D	Independent	2	St Loyes		1945
Russell, E	Labour	2	Exwick		Stood 1945
Saunders, G A	Labour	3	St Pauls		1934?, 1937, Stood 1946 (Cowick)
Saunders, R Glave	Liberal	1	Exwick		1929, 1932, 1935?
Sawdye, Edward	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Coal merchant	1922
Seaton, A.S		1			
Selway, Edward	Ratepayer/Conservative	1	Polsloe	Engine driver (retired 1924)	1924, 1927
Seward, J D	Conservative	1	Belmont		1935? 1938
Shepard, Edwin	Independent	1	St Sidwells	Builder (retired)	Stood 1920, 1921
Simey, William Spensley	Conservative	1	St Leonards	Solicitor	1931, 1934?, 1937
Slader, W T	Liberal	1	St Sidwells		1923?, 1929, 1932, 1935?, 1938
Smale, W.L.B	Independent	1	Trinity		1935, 1938
Smith, A.R	Conservative	1	Heavitree		1935
Smith, Richard	Conservative	1	St Davids	Schoolmaster (retired)	1921, 1924, 1927
Southard, Wallace Edgar	Liberal	1	Exwick	Tailor & Outfitter	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931,1934,

					1937
Splatt, Edith	Ratepayer/Independent	1	Belmont	Journalist	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936? Stood 1920 (Rougemont)
Steel-Perkins, John Shirley S	Conservative	1	St Petrocks	Surgeon	1920, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Stocker, John		1			
Stokes, James	Liberal	1	Trinity & Cowick	Stokes Fruit & potato merchants	
Tallman, John William	Labour	1	Trinity	Postman	1921, 1924, 1927
Tarr, Francis Henry	Labour (leader)	3	Cowick, St Thomas	Print machine operator	1922, 1925 (Cowick), 1930, 1933 (St Thomas), Stood 1928, 1929 (St John)
Templeman, Thomas John Wembridge	Liberal	3	St Matthews	Soliciter	1922, 1923, 1925, 1928, 1931, Stood 1937, 1938 (St James)
Thomas, Arthur C	Conservative	1	Wonford		1932, Stood 1925 (Trinity)
Thomas, B L	Ratepayers	3	St James		1938, Stood 1935 (Cowick), 1946
Thomas, J L	Labour	1	Wonford		1937
Thompson, Vincent	Ratepayers/Independent/ Conservative (leader)	3	Wonford, St Petrock	Solicitor	1924 (Wonford), 1928, 1931, 1934?, 1937 (St Petrocks),
Tinkham, Ellen Edith	Liberal	1	Cowick		1935, 1938
Towill, Frederick George	Unionist/Conservative	1	St Petrocks	Jeweller	1921, 1924, 1927
Townsend, William	Conservative	1	St Leonards	Printer	1922, 1925
Tribble, Charles John	Labour	1	Heavitree	Goods Guard	1933, 1938, Stood 1920, 1921, 1923, 1926 (St Matthew), 1927, 1928, 1929, 1936, 1937
Varwell, H. B		1			
Varwell, James Owen		1			
Venton, H	Conservative	1	St Davids	Goods manager, LSWR (retired)	1922
Vlieland, C.J		1		Doctor	
Walaron, J	Liberal	1	St Johns		Stood 1929 St Sidwell
Ware, Edgar Felix	Conservative	1	Heavitree	Architect & Surveyor	1920, 1921
Warne, J G	Independent	1	St Davids		1935?, 1938
Warren, Charles	Conservative	1	St Leonards	Engineer	1920, 1921, 1923, 1926, 1929
Wayland Smith, R		3		Surgeon	
Weston, P C	Conservative	2	Cowick		1949

Wheatley, Edward Pearce	Liberal	1	St Johns	Merchant	1931, 1934?, Stood 1930, 1937
Wheaton, B	Ratepayer	2	St James		Stood 1945
White, Sebastian Moreton	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Motor industry	1920,
Whitton, G.W	Conservative	1	Wonford/St Loyes		1929, 1946
Wickham, W.E.G	Independent	1	Trinity		1936
Widgery, Frederick John		1			
Willey, Thornton	Conservative	1	St Thomas	Engineer	1924, Stood 1927
Williams, Charles Henry	Independent/Ratepayers/Conservative	1	St Pauls	Marine Engineer, Licenced Victualler	1923, 1926, 1929, Stood 1920, 1921
Wills, William O	Ratepayer	1	Belmont	Draper	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Wippell, J.H	Conservative	2	St Leonards		Stood 1945
Woodcock, S.W	Conservative				
Woodland, C	Conservative	2	Rougemont		1945
Wright, Charles Lee	Conservative	1	Rougemont	Chartered Surveyor	1924
Yendell, C		1			
Yeo, Samuel John	Conservative/Unionist	1	St Sidwells	Garage owner	Stood 1921
Young, George Henry	Labour	1	St Thomas	Trade Society Officer	1921, Stood 1924

Appendix C: Plymouth Council Members

Name	Party Affliation	Pre or Post War	Ward etc	Profession	Years Elected/Stood
Andrews, Ambrose	Liberal	1	Mutley	Building Contractor (r)	1926, 1929, Stood in 1922 (Pennycross), 1923. Died Oct 1930
Argall, Joseph Stevens	Liberal	1	Drake	Insurance Manager	1921, stood in 1924, 1925
Artus, Hedley Alfred Charles	Labour	1	Drake	Engine Fitter & Turner	1926, 1929, Stood in 1923, 1925, 1932, 1937 (Pennycross), Stood 1938 (Pennycross)
Atwill, R	Conservative	1	Drake	Company Director	1922
Avery, H	Labour	1	Molesworth		1926, 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938
Axworthy, R F	Conservative	1	St Andrews		1933, 1936
Baker, G	Conservative	1	Stoke		1930, 1933, 1936
Baker, R H	Conservative	1	Drake	Motor Engineer	1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Barrett, F J	Labour	1	Keyham		1925, Stood 1928
Bastard, William Lalean	Unionist/Conservative	1	Laira	Royal Navy victualling officer (r)	1921,1924,1927, 1930, 1933
Baxter, Frederick David	Conservative	1	Compton	Tax assessor & collector	1928, 1931
Bayly, Elizabeth Mary	Independent	1	Mutley	'Spinster'	1921, Stood 1927, JP
Best, William Richard	Labour	2	Molesworth	Skilled Labourer	1946
Blakeney, W E	Conservative	2	Compton		1947
Blight, Francis William	Unionist	1	Mount Edgcumbe	Iron & Steel Merchant	1921
Bone, S.F	Labour	1	Molesworth		1934, 1937
Bradley, Gordon Neil	Labour	2	Keyham, Sutton	Solicitor	1945 (Keyham), 1949 (Sutton)
Braund, Headly Artus Marwood	Liberal	1	Laira		1928
Brendon, C E	Conservative	1	St Andrews	Printer	1925, 1931, 1934
Broad, Edwin	Conservative	2	Stoke	Solicitor	1946
Brock, Ada Lilian Mrs	Conservative	3	Valletort		1933, 1936, 1945
Brock, Ernest	Conservative	3	Valletort		1930, 1934, 1937, 1946
Brook, Ernest	Conservative	1	Valletort		1928, 1931
Brown, J H	Conservative	1	Sutton	Tobacconist	1922
Brown, J P		1			
Brown, P B	Liberal	1	Mutley		1937
Brown, Walter	Conservative	3	Nelson	Commissioning Agent	1933, Stood 1945
Bull, Percy George	Labour	3	Ford	'Chargeman of Fitters'	1929, 1946, Stood 1950
Bushnell, F G	Labour	1	Valletort		1925, Stood 1928
Campbell, John William Archibold	Labour	1	Molesworth	Royal Navy Engineer Lieutenant (r)	1925, 1928, 1931 Stood 1923,
Cantell, W H	Conservative	1	Ford	Royal Navy Lieutenant (r)	1922, 1927, Stood 1925
Chapman, F	Conservative	2	Drake		1949
Churchward, James	Labour	1	Friary	Joiner	1922, Stood 1933 Pennycross
Clarke, T Alfred	Conservative/Independent	1	St Aubyn, Mount Edgcumbe, Nelson	Grocer/Wine & Spirit merchant	1922, 1925, 1924 (Mt Edgcumbe), 1930 (Nelson) Stood 1927 Mt Edgcumbe, 1928 St Aubyn,
Cload, C R	Conservative	1	Vintry		1930, 1933

Cockerton, A E	Conservative	1	St Andrews		1937
Collier, F.J	Conservative	1	Nelson		1934, 1937, Stood 1947 Ford,
Collings, Arthur	Conservative	1	Compton	Company Director	1923, 1926
Colmer, Priscilla Linda Florence Mrs	Labour	2	Nelson, Ernsettle	Married	1946 (Nelson), 1950 (Ernsettle)
Coram, W F	Liberal	1	St Aubyn		1929
Cornish, John Lilleycrap	Conservative	1	Mutley	Auctioneer & Valuer	1923, 1924
Crimp, A H	Conservative	1	Stoke,	Royal Navy Engineer-Lieutenant (r)	1924, 1932, 1935, 1938, Stood 1929, 1931 (Molesworth),
Crowle, Arthur Grey	Unionist	1	Pennycross	Gentleman	1921
Cummings, G W	Liberal	1	Keyham		1932, 1935, 1938, Stood
Damerell, H G	Conservative	3	Nelson		1932, 1935, 1947
Davey, Bessie Mrs	Labour	2	Laira, Mount Gold	Housewife	1945 (Laira), Stood 1950 (Mt Gold)
Davey, Ernest Frederick Henry	Conservative	1	Ford	Theatre owner	1923
Daymond, Clara Henrietta (Mrs)	Independent/Conservative	1	St Budeaux		1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1937
Daymond, George Andrew	Independent/Conservative	1	St Budeaux	Gentleman	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Dean, C L	Conservative	1	Friary	Royal Navy Engineer (r)	1928, 1931, 1934, 1937
Deans, John E	Liberal	1	Pennycross		1935, 1938
Delaforce, G R	Conservative	2	Laira		1947
Dodridge, W S	Liberal	1	Molesworth		1930
Drake, G	Labour	2	Molesworth		1949
Dunstan, Lovell Bedmore	Conservative	1	Drake	Ships Stores Merchant	1925, 1928, 1931
Dymond, George Pearse	Liberal	1	Laira	Schoolmaster/Headmaster	1922, 1925, Stood 1921,
Earl, E A	Conservative	1	Nelson	Decorator	1922
Eastaway, H J	Conservative	1	Mount Edgcumbe		1938
Edgecumbe, C G Comm	Conservative	2	Trelawney		1950
Farrell, J C	Labour	1	Stoke		1929
Flawn, Frederick John Capt.	Conservative	2	Pennycross	Royal Marines Captain (r)	1946
Folley, J	Labour	2	Sutton		1950
Foot, Hedley George	Liberal	1	Charles		1932, 1935
Foot, Isaac	Liberal	1	Charles	Solicitor	1921
Ford, Leonard	Labour	3	Charles, St Peter	Railway Carridge Inspector	1937 (Charles), 1946, 1949, 1950 (St Peter)
Franklin, T H	Labour	2	Friary		1950
Frayer, Arthur Ernest	Labour	2	Stoke	'Independent'	1945
George, Joseph Archibald	Labour	1	Charles		1929, 1933 Stood 1932, 1938
Giles, S A	Liberal National	3	St Aubyn		1938, 1947
Glanville, C E	Conservative	2	Drake		1947
Godding, J W		1			

S					
Goldberg, A	Conservative	3	Valletort, St Andrews		1938, 1947 (Valletort), 1950 (St Andrews)
Goodman, A	Liberal	1	St Aubyn		1930, 1933, 1936
Goss, W T	Conservative	1	Mount Edgcumbe		1927, 1930
Gould, Stanley Lincoln	Conservative	2	St Andrews	Shipbroker	1946
Grant, E R	Conservative	1	Molesworth	Royal Navy Lieutenant (r)	1922
Gratton, H Mrs	Conservative	2	Ford		1950
Gregory, Arthur Helson	Labour	1	Charles	GWR Ticket Inspector	1927, 1934, Stood 1930, 1931, JP
Gribble, William Stanley	Labour	2	Mount Edgcombe	Secretary at Dockyard	1945
Guiness, A F G	Conservative	1	Charles	'Medical practitioner'	1924
Hampton, A A H	Conservative	2	Drake		1949, 1950
Harding, Charles	Conservative	1	Compton		1922, 1925
Harvey, T B	Labour	2	Ford		1947
Hatherley, Ernest John	Labour	2	Sutton, Friary	Plasterer	1946 (Sutton), 1949 (Friary)
Hatherley, J E	Liberal National	1	St Budeaux	Paymaster Lieutenant	1938,
Healey, Charles Henry	Unionist/Independent	1	St Aubyn	Gentleman	1921, Stood 1924, 1925
Heath, John	Unionist	1	Compton	Civil Servant (r)	1921, 1924
Hellen, J H	Conservative	1	Nelson	Retired	1925, 1928, 1931
Hicks, F R	Conservative	2	Pennycross		1947
Hingston, Thomas Alfred	Labour	2	Charles	Fish Fryer	1945
Hobbs, W H	Conservative	2	St Budeaux		1950
Hodge, Louis John	Labour/Socialist	3	St Peters	Electrical Fitter	1925, 1928, 1935, 1938, 1946, Stood 1931
Hollely, Arthur Newton	Unionist/Conservative	1	St Andrews	Draper	1921, 1924, 1927, 1930
Holmes, G P	Conservative	1	Compton		1927, 1930, 1933, 1936
Hornabrook, Beta (Mrs)	Liberal	1	St Aubyn	'Married'	1924, 1927, Stood 1921,
Huddard, E W Mrs	Conservative	2	Charles		1950
Huddey, A G	Conservative	1	St Andrews		1926, 1929, 1932, 1935
Hunt, Cecil Fitzherbert	Labour	2	Compton	Admiralty Hall Porter	1945, Stood 1949, 1950
Hurley, W H	Conservative	1	Stoke		1937
Innes, D Mrs	Conservative	2	Compton		1950
Jago, A C	Conservative	1	Pennycross		1925, 1928
Jeffery, T.G.C	Conservative	1	Drake		1934
Jenkin, James	Unionist/Conservative	1	Ford	Royal Navy Pensioner	1921,1924
Jolly, H C	Labour	1	Sutton		1927,
Jolly, Minnie Mrs	Labour	2	Mutley	Admiralty Tracer	1945
Jolly, P A	Labour	1	Sutton		1930
Kelland, F S C	Labour	1	Valletort		1927, Stood 1930
Kimber, John	Conservative	1	Keyham	Motor Engineer	1923
King, C.S	Labour	1	St Peters		1934, 1937
King, Jack	Labour	2	St Budeaux	Plumber	1946
King, R	Labour	2	Charles		1947

Klipp, William John	Conservative	3	Pennycross	Decorator	1927, 1930, 1933, 1936, Stood 1945
Knight, W J	Labour	2	Vintry		1945
Lander, C L Dr	Labour	1	Stoke	Surgeon	1927, 1931,
Lavelle, E J	Liberal	1	St Aubyn		1932, 1935, Stood 1938
Lawrence Spear, H	Liberal	1	Laira		1926
Leatherby, E Stanley	Conservative	3	Vintry		1926, 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, 1947
Leatherby, Francis George	Conservative	3	Compton	Company Director	1932, 1935, 1938, 1946
Lee, Oliver Lieut.	Unionist/Conservative	1	Keyham	Royal Navy (r)	1921,1924, 1927, Stood 1931 (Ford)
Leest, A F	Conservative	1	Keyham		1936
Ley, W J	Conservative	1	Ford		1926
Lisborne, Arthur	Labour	2	Friary	Electrician	1945
Lishman, W F	Labour	2	Sutton		1947
Littleton, Walter Reginald	Conservative	3	Stoke		1949
Lobb, Joseph Harold Denithorne	Labour	2	Drake	Trade Union Official	1945
Love, Jospeh Boyd		1			
Lucas, William Woon	Liberal	1	Sutton	Builder	1921, 1924
Luckes, R S	Conservative	2	Crownhill		1949
Madge, Philip Henry	Labour	2	Laira	Railway Clerk	1946
Marshall, J (Mrs)	Labour	3	Sutton		1925, 1933 Stood 1924 (St Andrews)
Mason, Henry George	Labour	3	St Peters		1929, 1932, JP
Matthews, W J	Conservative	1	Friary		1927, 1930, Stood 1933
Mayne, Arthur R	Young Liberal	1	St Peters	Civil Servant	1931
McDonald, Reginald	Conservative	1	Molesworth	Solicitor	1923
Mears, R	Conservative	1	Drake		1937
Medland, Herbert Moses	Labour	1	St Peters, Mount Edgcumbe	Engineer	1923, 1926, 1933 (Mt Edgcumbe), 1949 (St Peter), Stood 1922 (Keyham)
Miller, William Alexander	Labour	1	Valletort	Electrical Wireman	1923, 1926, Stood 1922 (Mt Edgcumbe), 1933
Mills, R G	Labour	2	St Budeaux		1947, Stood 1950
Mitchell, R J	Liberal	1	Mutley	Corn & Flour Merchant	1922, 1928, 1931, 1934
Mitchell, W H	Conservative	1	Mount Edgcumbe	Pastry cook & confectioner	1922
Modley, William John Waldron	Unionist	1	Vintry	Ice Merchant	1921, 1924
Morgans, J H	Conservative	1	Laira		1932, 1936
Morrell, William George Seagrove	Conservative	1	Pennycross, Molesworth	Royal Navy Shipwright-Lieutenant (r)	1922, 1924 (Molesworth), Stood 1927 Molesworth
Moses, J J H	Labour	1	Molesworth		1933, 1936, Stood 1930 Molesworth
Munday, W L		1			
Nash, F David	Labour	2	Pennycross	Solicitor	1945, Stood 1949 (Peverell)
Newbery, L	Labour	2	Molesworth		1950

Mrs					
Newland, Joseph Eli	Unionist	1	Valletort	Baker (r)	1921
Norris, Willliam Ernest	Unionist/Conservative	1	St Peters	Army Officer (r)	1921, 1924
Nuttall, E D	Labour	2	Ernsettle		1949
Oats, Frederick James	Liberal	2	Mutley	Auctioneer & Estate Agent	1946
Oats, W J	Labour	2	Friary		1947
Oke, Richard Runnells	Labour	1	Sutton	Railway Guard	1923, 1926, Stood 1922
Olden, William	Conservative	1	Stoke	Gentleman	1923, 1926, 1929
Osborne, Charles James	Labour	2	Keyham	Electrical Fitter	1946
O'Shea,E B Mrs	Labour	1	St Peters		1927, Stood 1931 (Pennycross)
Parker, L S	Labour	2	St Peters		1947
Parker, T E	Conservative	1	Valletort	Butcher	1924
Parnell, A T	Conservative	2	Stoke		1947, 1950
Parsons, Frederick Maynard	Conservative	1	St Andrews	Gentlemans Outfitter	1923
Pascho, P D	Conservative	2	Peverell		1950
Pattison, H M	Conservative	2	St Andrews, Mount Gold		1947, 1950
Paul, Leslie Francis	Conservative	3	Vintry, Compton	Newsagent	1936 (Vintry), 1949 (Compton), Stood 1945, 1946 (Vintry)
Pearse, A	Conservative	1	Mount Edgcumbe		1932, 1935
Pearse, Isaac		1			
Pengelly, R	Conservative	1	Keyham	Tobacconist & Newsagent	1922, Stood 1925
Perry, Edmund William	Labour	1	Friary, Sutton	Engine Driver	1924 (Friary), 1945, 1946 (Sutton), stood 1921,1927
Perry, Herbert James	Labour/Socialist	1	Pennycross, Valletort, Molesworth	Electrical Fitter	1924, 1932, 1935 (Valletort), 1945 (Molesworth), Stood 1921, 1923, 1927, 1929, 1938 (Valletort), Relation of E.W Perry?
Pettett, Sydney W R	Conservative	1	Pennycross	Civil Servant	1931, 1934, 1937
Phillips, H.G	Liberal	1	Laira		1934, 1937
Pillar, James Elliot	Liberal	1	Pennycross	Tailor	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932
Pitcher, Albert Edward John	Unionist/Conservative	1	Nelson	House decorator	1921, 1924, 1927
Pook, W Jessie (Mrs)	Conservative	3	Mutley		1927, 1930, 1933, 1936, Stood 1945
Poole, J Lieut. Comm	Conservative	1	Keyham		1930
Pooley, Benjamin	Liberal	1	Charles	Baker & Confectioner	1922
Porter, Harry	Conservative	3	Mount Edgcumbe		1925, 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937, 1947, Stood 1945
Potter, F	Conservative	1	St Aubyn		1923, 1926
Potter, Sidney Charles	Labour	3	Vintry	Hairdresser	1934, 1937, 1946
Priest, Richard	Conservative	1	Vintry	Engineer	1923
Priest, William Hamilton Jollow	Conservative	3	Charles, Crownhill	Engineer	1925, 1928, 1931 (Charles), 1945 (Crownhill)
Prynn, F	Conservative	1	Compton		1934, 1937

Ray, R.C.C	Conservative	1	Drake		1935, 1938
Reed, Samuel Charles	Conservative	1	Nelson	Tobacconist	1923, 1926, Stood 1929
Reid, H C C	Conservative	1	Charles		1930
Rendle, A H	Conservative	1	Valletort	Licensed Victualler	1922, Stood 1925
Renney, Percy Tosh	Conservative	1	Charles	Contractor	1923, 1926
Robins, Hester	Liberal/National Liberal	1	St Aubyn		1928, 1931, 1934, 1937
Rogers, Edward Williams	Liberal	1	St Budeaux	Retired Lieutenant	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932, 1935
Ross, G P	Labour	3	Ford	Coppersmith	1925, 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937, 1949
Rowse, George Avery	Conservative	1	Drake	Dentist	1923, Stood 1927 (St Aubyn)
Russell, L J L	Conservative	2	Crownhill		1949, 1950
Rutter, W	Liberal	1	Keyham		1928
Ryall, F M	Conservative	2	Molesworth		1947, Stood 1949
Sangwell, Herbert Stanley	Conservative	2	Crownhill	Lietenant Commander Royal Navy (r)	1946
Scoble, G S	Labour	1	Friary		1925, 1933, 1936
Scott, E A	Conservative	1	Drake		1932
Slocombe, G W	Conservative	2	Peverell		1949
Smith, Robert Alfred	Conservative	2	St Andrews	Draper	1945
Soltau, A B Dr	Conservative	1	St Andrews	Doctor	1922
Sparrow, Frederick Ernest	Labour	3	St Peters	Civil Servant (r)	1930, 1933, 1936, 1945
Spear, H L	Liberal	1	Charles		1938, Stood 1947
Stephens, E G	Labour	3	Nelson		1929, 1933, 1947 (Keyham) Stood 1945 (Keyham), 1949 (Stoke)
Stephens, Soloman	Liberal (Leader)	1	Laira		1923
Stephens, W R	Conservative	1	St Peters	Outfitter	1922
Strachan, A L	National Conservative	1	Charles		1936
Strawbridge, William Ezra	Labour	2	Drake		1946
Stubbs, Ernest Arthur Travers	Liberal	1	Friary	Physician & Surgeon	1923, 1926, 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, Stood 1922
Tamblin, J	Labour	1	Molesworth		1927
Taylor, A.E	Conservative	1	Keyham		1934, 1937
Taylor, W Harry	Conservative	3	Mutley		1932, 1935, 1947
Thatcher, A.G.H	Conservative	1	Laira		1935, 1938
Townsend, C H	Labour	1	Sutton	Plumber	1928, 1931, 1937
Tozer, A J	Conservative(Unionist?)	1			Conservative leader 1920
Tozer, J Clifford	Conservative	1	Stoke	Draper	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1934
Treblecock, H L	Conservative	2	Crownhill		1947
Tucker, W P	Labour	2	St Budeaux		1949
Viggers, Frederick	Unionist	2	Stoke	Dairy Farmer	1921
Vosper, Archibold R	Labour	1	Keyham		1926, 1929, 1933

Wakeham, William George	Liberal	1	Friary	Joinery Manufacturer	1921
Wall, Joseph Harry	Labour	2	St Aubyn	Grocer	1945, Stood 1950
Ward, R C	Conservative	1	Ford	Lieutenant Commander	1932, 1935, 1938
Washbourn, Percival Norman	National Liberal	2	St Aubyn	Meat Trader	1946, 1950
Watkins, T H	Labour	2	Efford		1949, 1950
Webb, A E H	Conservative	1	Vintry	Coach & Motor Trimmer, Hotelier	1922, 1925, 1928, 1931
Welsford, William Henry	Unionist	1	Molesworth	Civil Servant (r)	1921
Western, William Henry	Labour	1	Ford		Unknown, elected Alderman in 1921
Westlake, George	Conservative	1	Mount Edgcumbe	Funeral Furnisher	1923, 1926, 1929,
Westlake, William Gregory	Conservative	2	Mount Edgcumbe	Funeral Director	1946
Wilks, William John	Labour	2	Nelson	Skilled Labourer	1945, 1950
Williams, H E	Labour	1	Sutton		1932, 1935, 1938
Willliams, G H	Labour	1	Vintry	Stone Sawyer	1927, Stood 1930, 1931, 1932
Wingate, George John	Labour	2	St Budeaux	Iron Caulker	1945
Winnicott, John Frederick Sir		1			
Woollcombe, J Y	Conservative	1			
Wright, Edward Henry	Labour	3	Ford	Civil Servant	1927, 1930, 1933, 1936, 1945

Appendix D: Bristol Maps and Illustrations

All OS maps courtesy of the Bristol Record Office


S T. J A M E S S W A R D
BRISTOL WARD
Bristol Bridge
HAY MARKET
HORSE FAIR
BROAD MEAD
LEWINS MEAD
RUPERT STREET
NELSON L.B. STREET
ALL SAINTS' STREET
QUAY STREET
BROAD STREET
WINE STREET
CORN STREET
HIGH STREET
BALDWIN STREET
MARKET
NICHOLAS STREET
CLARE STREET
PETER STREET
FAIRFAX STREET
MERCHANT STREET
UNION STREET
BATH STREET
BRIDGE STREET
NORTH STREET
BARRS STREET
KING STREET
ROSEMARY
Tramway Depot
Grave Yard
Urinal
Boat House
Urinal
Urinal
Bristol Bridge
Grand Hotel
Brewery
Brewery
Church
Church
St. Stephen Church
St. Nicholas's Church
Statue
Statue
Bank
Bank
Bank

Figure 2: Central Bristol, post-blitz (O/S 25" County Series, Sheet 71/6, 1944)

Figure 3: Post-war central Bristol (O/S 1:2500National Grid Series, sheet ST5972)

Figure 4: Castle Park, Bristol: St Peter's (ruin) represents the centre of the old shopping district of Wine Street/Castle Street

Figure 5: Castle Park, Bristol

Figure 6: Centre of Broadmead, looking along Merchant Street to Horsefair.

Figure 7: Corner of Broadmead and Merchant Street. Note curving frontage

Figure 8: Broadmead, east side

Figure 9: Broadmead, west side

Figure 10: Old and new – The Arcade, fitted into the new Broadmead.

Figure 11: Entrance to Wesleyan Chapel on Broadmead. Note differing building heights to right, demonstrating problems with architectural control.

Figure 12: Horsefair, east side.

Figure 13: Horsefair, west side

Figure 14 & 15: Corner detailing on junction of Broadmead and Union Street. The differing treatment demonstrates the lack of architectural control.

Figure 16 & 17: Corner detailing on Merchant Street/Horsefair and Horsefair/Union Street junctions. Note oblique angle common to post-war building.

Figure 18: Primark (formerly Lewis' department store), Horsefair. The monumental architecture of Horsfair contrasts starkly with the more muted classicism of Broadmead.

Figure 19: Marks and Spencer, built in the Neo-Classic style..

Appendix E: Plymouth Maps and Illustrations

All photographs are copyright of the author

All OS maps courtesy of the Devon Heritage Centre

Figure 20: Pre-war central Plymouth (O/S 25” County Series, sheet 123/8. 1935).

Figure 21: Post-war central Plymouth (OS 1:12500 National Grid, sheet SX4754, 1952)

Figure 22: Post-war central Plymouth (OS 1:2500 National Grid sheet 123/8, 1962)

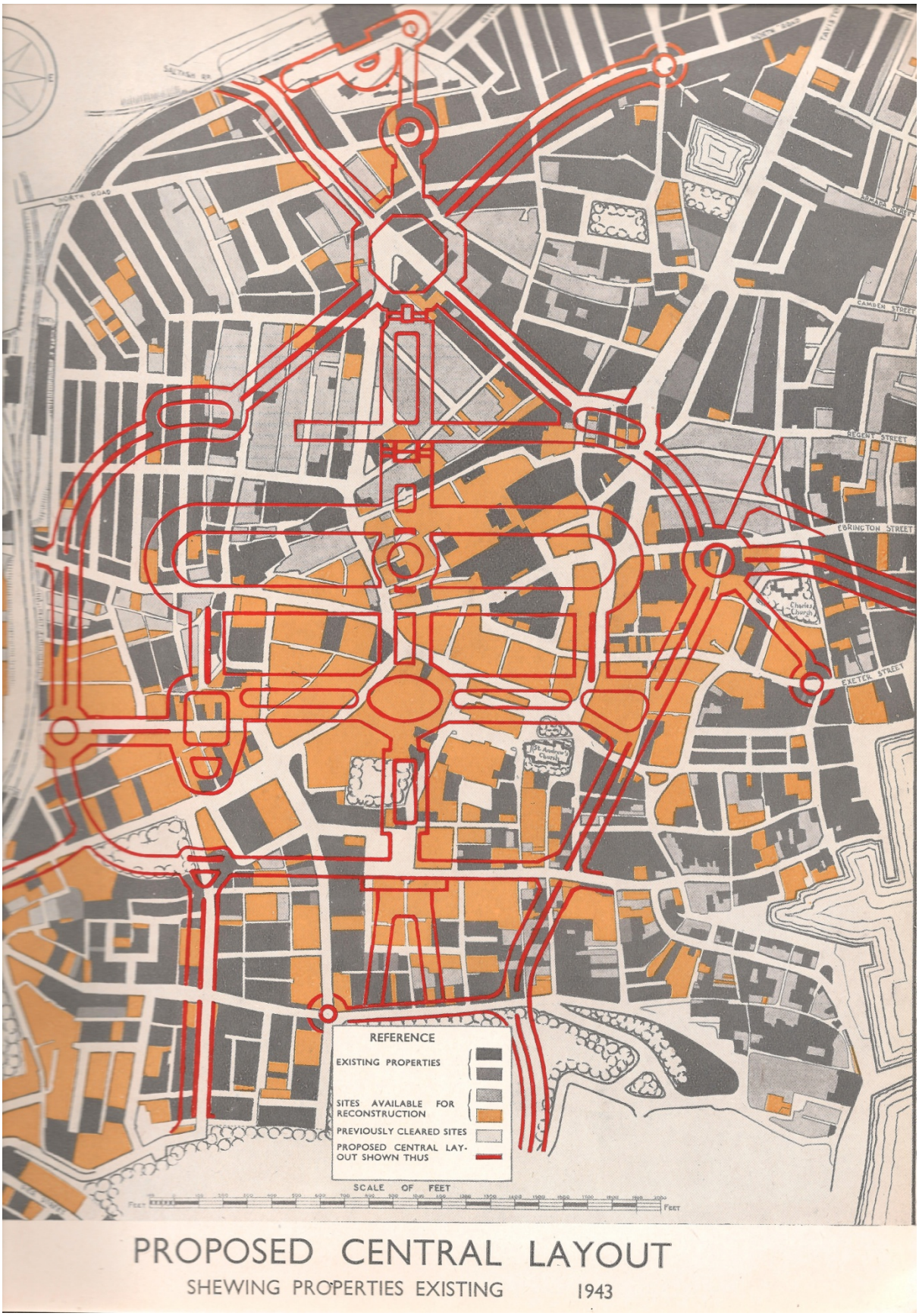


Figure 23: Proposed layout and bomb damage (*Plan for Plymouth,* p.110).

Figure 24: Layout for new Plymouth centre (*Plan for Plymouth,* p.66)

Figure 25: Royal Parade looking toward St Andrew's Cross

Figure 26: Armada Way

Figure 27: House of Fraser (formerly Dingle's) on the corner of Armada Way and Royal Parade (right-hand side)

Figure 28: Pearl Assurance House on the corner of Armada Way and Royal Parade (left-hand side)

Figure 29: Royal Parade looking towards Derry's Cross

Figure 30: Corner of Royal Parade at St Andrew's Cross

Figure 31: Corner of Royal Parade and Old Town Street (St Andrew's Cross)

Figure 32: Corner of Old Town Street and Exeter Street (St Andrew's Cross). Note similarities with Broadmead, Bristol (see fig.)

Figure 33: Royal Bank of Scotland (formerly Westminster Bank), top of Royal Parade.

Figure 34: St Andrew's Cross fountains and RBS building.

Figure 35: Old Town Street


Figure 36: Opposite side of Old Town Street, looking towards St Andrew's Cross. Note use of palm trees in planting, as recommended by Abercrombie.

Figure 37: New George Street, west side at junction with Old Town Street.

Figure 38: New George Street, east side at junction with Old Town Street, looking toward Armada Way.

Figure 39: New George Street, west side, looking toward junction with Armada Way.

Figure 40: New George Street, east side, looking toward junction with Armada Way.

Figure 41: New George Street, west side, looking towards Raleigh Street.

Figure 42: New George Street, east side, below junction with Armada Way. Note change of line to accommodate pre-war buildings (building with clock was Western Morning News offices).

Figure 43: Cornwall Street, west side, looking toward the new Drake Circus. Note change of materials to brick

Figure 44: Cornwall Street, east side, looking toward the new Drake Circus

Figure 45: Mayflower Street. The later building was not in such good style, using very stark designs and materials. The 1970's Money Centre can be seen in the background.

Figure 46: Pre-war buildings at Derry's Cross, demonstrating the architectural continuity between the two eras.

Figure 47: Lloyd's Bank, Royal Parade. Lloyd's used an unusal teak cladding on their frontage, but kept the Neo-Classical styling common to the rest of the city.

Figure 48 & 49: Detailing on Lloyd's building

Figure 50 & 51: Detailing on House of Fraser (Dingle's) building and former Martin's Bank.

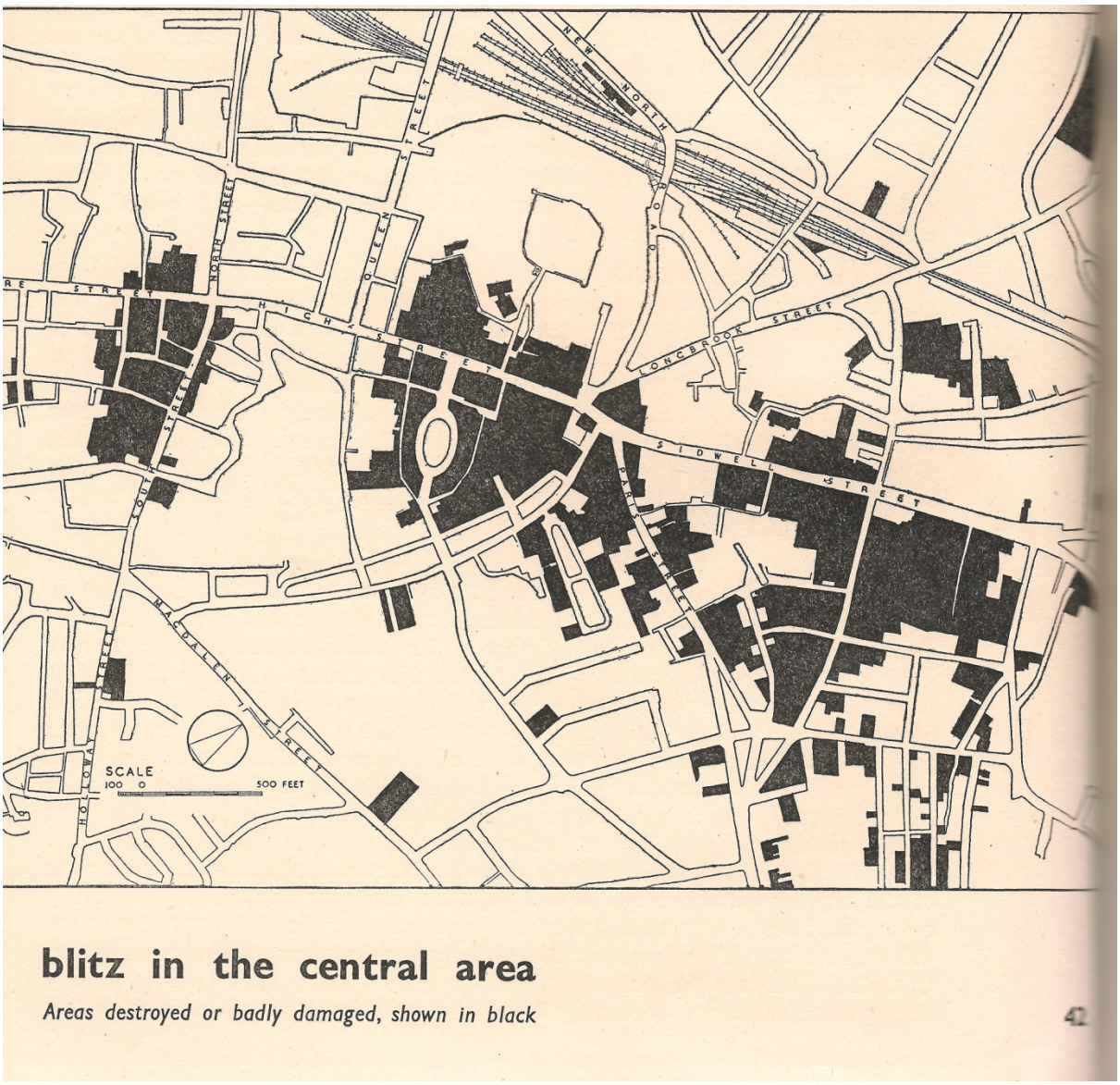
Figure 52 & 53: Corner detailing on New George Street

Appendix F: Exeter Maps and Illustrations

All OS maps courtesy of the Devon Heritage Centre

Figure 54: Pre-War Central Exeter (OS 25" County Series, sheet 80/6, 1932)

Figure 55: Post-War Central Exeter (OS 1:2500 National Grid sheet SX92/92, 1961)



blitz in the central area

Areas destroyed or badly damaged, shown in black

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Figure 56: Bomb damage to central areas (Sharp, *Exeter Phoenix,* p.42)

Figure 57: Central Exeter, as replanned by Sharp
(*Exeter Phoenix,* p.96)

Figure 58: High Street Exeter, looking east towards Sidwell Street

Figure 59: High Street, Exeter, north side (groups 2 & 3, built by Pearl Assurance, Commercial Union and Westminster bank)

Figure 60: High Street, Exeter, north side (group 3, built by Westminster Bank)

Figure 61: High Street, Exeter, north side (group 4, built by Marks & Spencer)

Figure 62: High Street, Exeter, south side (group 11 & 10, built by Ravenseft and Barclay's Bank)

Figure 63: High Street, Exeter, south side (group12, built by Ravenseft)

Figure 64: High Street, north side (group 6, built by Boot's).

Figure 65: High Street, north side, looking toward Queen Street junction (group 7, built by County Book Shop and Colson's department store).

Figure 66: High Street, south side at junction with Bedford Street (group 8)

Figure 67: High Street at junction with Bedford Street (group 8). Note Art Deco inspired detailing on oblique angles and window detailing.

Figure 68: Beford Street, west side (group 9, built by Martin's Bank and the Exeter Savings Bank).

Figure 69: Bedford Street, west side (group 10, built by Barclay's Bank)

Figure 70: Princesshay, c.1997, looking west toward the Cathedral (groups 14 & 15, built by Ravenseft and demolished in 2003)

Figure 71: Princesshay, c.1970, looking east toward Eastgate. Memorial plaque unveiled by Princess Elizabeth in foreground (postcard in authors' collection).

Figure 72:. High Street, north side (group 1, built by Curry's, Burton's and Lloyd's Bank).

Figure 73: Rest garden behind group 7 in Catherine Street. Ruined almshouses and chapel to the left, retained as war memorial

Figure 74: Pre-war telephone exchange on junction of Musgrave Row, Bailey Street and Castle Street. Note similarities with post-war Lloyd's building (fig.72)

Figure 75: Old City Library, Castle Street. The continuity between pre- and post-war architecture is apparent, with the use of Neo-Classical detailing.

Figures 76 & 77: Corporate detailing on Martin's Bank and Barclay's Bank buildings.

Figure 78 & 79: Disputed detailing on group 11 – the arcade to Princesshay and the zig-zag detailing.

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